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XARIFFA'S POEMS.

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XARIFFA'S POEMS

THIRD EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.
1881.

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TO MY MOTHER.

DEAR Mother! In the still and solemn hours
That come so often in my lifetime now,
Like rocks that rise to intercept the flow
Of tides that sweep too swiftly past their shores,
How tenderly my heart thy name adores!
I see thee on thy pinnacle of years,
Thy feet just trembling on the Future's floors;
Thy locks of strength by Time's relentless shears
All shorn; toward the Yonder World thine eye
Uplifted yearningly. O Mother mine!
As the swift footsteps of the years go by
I cling to thee as to a thing divine,
And feel how dark a path my life would be,
Noblest of mothers, if bereft of thee.

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XARIFFA'S POEMS.

THE BACKWOODSMAN'S DAUGHTER.

I WAS a wanderer from my place of birth,
Seeking among the wide world's busy throng
A peaceful harbor for my woe-wrecked heart.
The charm of home was gone—the links of love,
So blessèd in their brightness, broken were,
And I had turned away, striving to heap
Upon the black grave of the past the dust
Of dim forgetfulness.

Toward the West
I turned my troubled brow. I had heard much
Of that fair land, where the untrammeled herd
The echoing turf salutes with scornful hoof.
Where verdant plains lie like unfolded scrolls
Whose emerald pages Nature paints with flowers;
Where the proud stag beside his timid mate
Drinks from undesecrated streams; and all
Seems like the Eden Garden ere the stain
Of sin besmeared its beauty. There I turned,
Not with the hope to find my joys again,

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But with intent my misery to hide
Out of men's sight for ever.

•

In the car
Which bore me on—whither I cared nor knew,
So it was westward and away—I marked
Among the travelers a swarthy pair—
A woodman and his wife. Between them sat
A child—a little girl—whose deep blue eyes,
Beneath their golden lashes hiding, looked
Like twin forget-me-nots by sunbeams kissed.
About her pretty brow and shoulders bare
Her yellow locks, not curled nor braided, hung
In glittering ripples to her slender waist.
So wonderfully fair she looked beside
Her rough protectors in her fragile grace,
She seemed like some frail wind-flower peeping out
From the broad shadow of two gnarled old oaks.

Her lips, steeped in their early innocence
Like morning buds in dew, parted at last,
And her few words tripped lightly over them
Like footsteps over flowers. "Father dear,"
She softly said, and twined her little hand
Amongst the old man's gray and stubborn locks—
"Dear father, tell me, are we almost home?
I am so weary of this clattering car,
This dust and din, and all this careless crowd
Of people whom I never saw before—
Tell me, dear father, are we almost home?"

"'Most home!" the sire returned and laid his hand
Upon her upturned brow; "and why, my child,

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Dost long to reach that spot which ill compares
With those fair city scenes whence you have come?
Dost thou forget the rich man's splendid home,
The busy streets, with all their glittering crowds,
The gay shop-windows where each day you saw
So many tempting toys and wondrous books?
And dost remember how you loved to hear
The chiming church-bells in the steeples high,
And often drew your little hand from mine
To climb the steps, and through the doorways vast
Catch glimpses of Religion's love of show?"

"True, father dear," the little one replied—
"True, I did like the busy city crowds,
The lofty houses where rich people dwell,
The gay shop-windows and the pretty toys,
Because they were so wonderful and new
To my unpracticed eyes. In vestibules
Of solemn churches, too, I loved to wait
To hear the wings of music beat the air
When the deep organ did the Sabbath greet.
I well remember how I drew away
My humble garments, lest they might defile
The dazzling robes of those who could afford
In worthier garb to worship. Yet I knew
The heart lies naked in our Father's sight,
Howe'er the form is clad; and I was sure
That He could see my fervent love for Him
Beneath my simple gown. I envied none
Their wealth, nor did I wonder that they wore
Their best in presence of their King."

"My child,"
The father said, while to his rugged face

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A smile came tenderly, "thy words are good;
But bear in mind that in thy Western home
All this which thou dost own to having loved,
Will, to thy beauty-loving eyes, be lost;
Such things belong not, darling, to the poor."

"The poor have memories just like the rich,"
She gently said. "I can remember all,
And make my mind a picture-book to read
To little friends who have not seen as much."

Into the father's eye leaped a swift tear
And trembled there, while with unsteady lip
His questions still he plied: "But tell me why
Thy little heart hath fixed itself, my child,
So fondly on our lowly wildwood cot?
There trials are, and hardships chain the hands
Of those who love thee, and exacting toil
Doth from affection steal her sweetest hours.
How can that spot be brighter in thy sight
Than homes where ease presides and care is not?"

Upon the woodman's wrinkled face the child
Fixed her blue eyes in wonder at his words;
And then, as if her little lips returned
The all-sufficient answer, she replied,
"Why, father, *that is home!*"

The shining tear
That had been trembling in the old man's eye,
Fell, at her words, down o'er his swarthy cheek,
And with a quick embrace of thankfulness
He clasped his darling to his rough, broad breast,

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Praising the Father that his child possessed
That best of blessings, a contented heart.

She, smiling there within his loving arms,
Recalled to him that little spot out West,
Where, in the sunny forest-clearing stood
Their lowly rough-hewn cabin, where each morn
The merry brook ran laughing past the door,
As if its freight were joy to all the world.
"There," murmured she, half dreaming in his arms.
"The livelong day among the woody wilds
I find such pretty playmates and playthings.
The velvet-footed rabbit waits for me
Beneath the sheltering cover of the fern;
The squirrel, chattering o'er his nutty meal,
Flies not at my approach; and pretty stones,
With fallen acorns, fill my lap with toys.
The cool moss seems to welcome my bare feet,
And birds recite their poetry to me
As perfectly as though I were a queen,
And never ask if I be rich or poor!"

Across her hair, while thus she prattled on,
The slanting sunbeams gently stretched themselves,
Then stole away like worshipers content
With having touched some consecrated thing.
Before the day was wholly gone, the train
Stopped at a backwoods station, and the child,
Holding the hands of those whose prize she was,
Passed from my sight for ever. She was home.

Long did I muse upon the simple scene;
And like a sharp rebuke the child's sweet words

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Sank in my restless heart. She, with a cot,
A few wild flowers and unfettered pets,
Was rich; whilst I, with all that wealth could give,
A glittering home and hosts of titled friends,
Lashed to the demon Discontent, was out
Upon the world a wanderer!

Long years
Have sped since then, but in my dreams by night
And in my walks by day, by that child's voice
I feel my sad heart haunted. Echoing there,
It hath for me a strange significance.
Out of the blazing blue of noonday skies,
And up beyond the midnight's starry depths,
It seems to gently lead my chastened soul,
And leave it trembling by mysterious gates,
While its soft echoes whisper, "That is home!"

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"JOHN."

I.

I STAND behind his elbow-chair,
My soft hands rest upon his hair—
Hair whose silver is dearer to me
Than all the gold of the earth could be—
And my eyes of brown
Look tenderly down
On John, my John.

II.

The firelight leaps and laughs and warms,
Wraps us both in its ruddy arms—
John, as he sits in the hearth-glow red,
Me, with my hands on his dear old head—
Encirling us both
Like a ring of troth,
Me and my John.

III.

His form has lost its early grace,
Wrinkles rest on his kindly face;

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His brow no longer is smooth and fair,
For Time has left his autograph there;
But a noble prize
In my loving eyes
Is John, my John.

IV.

"My love," he says—and lifts his hands,
Browned by the suns of other lands,
In tender clasp on my own to lay—
"How long ago was our wedding-day?"
I smile through my tears,
And say, "Years and years,
My John, dear John."

V.

We say no more—the firelight glows;
Both of us muse—on what, who knows?
My hands drop down in a mute caress—
Each throb of my heart is a wish to bless,
With my life's best worth,
The heart and the hearth
Of John, my John!

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THE TORCHLIGHT PROCESSION.

IN the dark, with a child on her bosom,
A woman is walking the floor;
And she moans while she hushes her darling,
"O God! it is hard to be poor!"
In the dark, with a child on her bosom—
The dark of a comfortless room;
Not even a candle's dull ray to soothe
The terrible ache of the gloom.

Down the street throngs a joyous procession,
With thousands of lamps all alight,
And the red glare of whispering rockets
Ascending the silence of night.
Oil enough for the multitudes marching,
And banners and ribbons and flowers,
While the blue of the zenith is blazing
With grand pyrotechnical showers.

All alone with her poor little burden,
A woman with hungering eyes
Soothes, with lips that are pallid with fasting,
Her famishing baby's cries.

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She catches the echoes of loud huzzas—
" Great God !" she sighs, under her breath,
" While Opulence squanders so much away,
Must my little ones starve to death ?"

Hark, the tramp of the marchers comes nearer !
Transparencies gleam past her door ;
There " Our Cause," " Our Kind," " Our Country,"
she reads,
But never one mottoed " Our Poor !"
And she looks at the flickering torches,
And counts the magnificent flags ;
Then turns with a gasp to her darkness again,
And her scanty, unseemly rags.

Like a river of light, the procession
Flows away down the stony street,
And the star-studded gates of the midnight
Close on the reverberant feet.
The music dies out in the distance,
All silently sink to their rest,
Save a maniac mother pacing the floor,
A little cold corpse on her breast.

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WIFE-WORDS.

I.

BELOVED one of my heart! how bright
The future lies before us!
Bathed in affection's purest light
It casts its sunshine o'er us;
And all the past of bitter hours,
Or ones of sadder seeming,
Forgotten are amid the flowers
On which our hearts lie dreaming.

II.

The gladsome earth we e'en might deem
Contained no grief or sadness,
So bright and joyous is our dream
Of Love's unclouded gladness.
Like twin-born flowers, our earnest hearts
Shall pass their days united;
And when the bloom of one departs,
The other will be blighted.

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III.

Clasped to thy fond and faithful breast,
The links of life seem lengthened,
And round our spirits softly rest
The ties our love has strengthened.
Thus wandering on, with hearts in one,
Souls linked so naught can sever:
We'll side by side seek that bright home
Where love endures for ever!

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AT THE BALL.

NAY, do not bend thy lips toward mine ear
To whisper, 'mid the music and the light,
And dizzy dancers' maddening career,
The story of thy strong heart's early blight.

I do not care to know. Of little worth
I count that friendship which would fain exact
As tribute due its accidental birth,
The key to thy past's storehouse of grim fact.

Keep thine own secrets hidden in thy heart;
'Twixt them and me let Silence hang her screen;
I ask but to rely on what thou art—
It matters little what thou may'st have been.

There is a Bluebeard's chamber with us all,
Perhaps—a little key, a lock all rust—
Where hangs, beheaded, on the gloomy wall
Within, our proudest hopes, our noblest trust.

Each human life its solemn mystery hath,
Its hidden love or its embittered hate;
Its weary wandering in some stony path,
Its fruitless beating 'gainst the bars of fate;

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Its eager aims at empyrean heights,
  Its downward hurling among lowly things;
The fading from its eyes of dearest sights,
  The silent folding of its bruisèd wings;

Its spring of promise, rich in bud and bloom,
  Its death and burial and its lonely stone,
Hewn from the quarries of despair and gloom,
  To mark some grave to all the world unknown!

So, if thou hast thy wounds, display them not—
  True sympathy demands no show of scars;
Trust sponges from life's tablet every blot,
  And doubt no honest friendship ever mars.

But come, the balcony grows chill, I feel;
  Back 'mong the merry maskers let us go,
To hear the tap of the hilarious heel,
  And see them point the educated toe.

The rush, the whirl, the music and the glare,
  The masks that hide false faces, and the ends
Encompassed by deception, all are there:
  Your arm—so—now, good-night, my best of friends.

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HOW MUCH DO YOU LOVE ME?

INSCRIBED TO ONE WHO ASKED THE QUESTION

HOW much do I love thee?
Go ask the deep sea
How many rare gems
In its coral caves be;
Or ask the broad billows
That ceaselessly roar,
How many bright sands
Do they kiss on the shore.

How much do I love thee?
Go ask of a star,
How many such worlds
In the universe are;
Or ask of the breezes
Which soothingly blow,
From whence do they come
And whither they go.

How much do I love thee?
Go ask of the sun
To tell when his course
Will for ever be done;

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Or demand of the dust
  Over which thou hast trod,
How many cold hearts
  Moulder under the sod.

How much do I love thee?
  When billow and sea
And star shall have told
  All their secrets to thee—
When zephyrs and sunbeam
  Their courses reveal—
Thou shalt know what this bosom
  Which loves thee can feel.

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EPITHALAMIUM.

ONE trembling foot upon the threshold golden
  Of that mysterious door
Which soon will swing upon its hinges olden,
Beckon her through the portal thus unfolden,
  And ope for her no more.

One foot on that untrodden threshold falling,
  One yet on girlhood's shore;
A voice on either side the portal calling;
Both tuned to love, but one almost appalling—
  One new, one known of yore.

Both tender, one half tearful, and both pleading—
  Yesterday and to-morrow;
She gives a hand to each; the Past, receding,
Cries, "Go! may thy true young heart know no
    bleeding,
  And thy pure soul no sorrow!"

She lingers yet by girlhood's gladsome river,
  Her gaze upon the tide;
She sees the sunbeams through the shadows quiver,
Life lures her with new charms it has to give her
  Upon the other side.

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The ripples reach her feet; she knows not whether
The more to joy or wonder;
And while she hesitates, the holy father
Has said, "Whom God our Lord hath joined together,
Let no man put asunder."

Let those who can shed no tears at a wedding—
Death's jocund-hearted brother.
Why should all tears be kept for funeral shedding?
In marriage, too, its mystic pathway treading,
Joy and woe kiss each other.

There the same robing is in novel raiment;
The parting pangs ensue;
The loved one's bliss received as precious payment
For grief which finds no other sweet allayment
With those who say adieu!

The mother sees a coffin in the bridal,
Smile on it though she may;
Her own heart lies there, shrouded, suicidal—
Bereft of what most blest life's lone abidal
In her she gives away.

Yet sound the harp—cease, cease, O heart! to tremble—
Joy to the wedded pair!
Lost is the tinkling brass and sounding cymbal
Of thoughtless years in the ennobling symbol
Their clasped hands now wear.

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They have gone forth on sunny seas united;
  Their sail, Love's pure white wing—
Their rudder, Trust; by which they both stand plighted,
Watching the compass which their way has righted—
  The golden wedding-ring.

Let them pass on, friend, father, sister, mother;
  With Hope's bright flag unfurled:
Heaven loves the wedded as it loves none other—
With perfect faith in God and one another
  They may defy the world.

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THE SUDDEN SHOWER.

THE weather, one day, appeared *en masque*,
With a deal of sunshine on—
A flaunt of blue o'er his great rain-cask,
Not a bit of cloud did he don.
The streets arose from their slough of despond,
The gutters felt mighty small;
The smiles came back to the face of the pond,
The grace to the grasses tall.

Too tempting by far! The belle and beau
Looked forth at the masker gay;
Huzza for the satin that shineth so,
For beauty and show to-day.
Parasol tiny and lithe rattan,
Bootee of patent leather;
Panama hat and sandal-wood fan,
All shining with the weather.

Rich *poult de soie* and barège *Anglais*,
And petticoats tucked to the knee;
Satinets, cassimers, *drap-d'été*,
And elegant organdie;

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And gorgeous silks, ten dollars a yard,
The exquisite green sunshade;
Young India mull—blest theme for the bard—
All join in the masquerade.

The gayest masker amongst them all—
The good-for-nothing weather—
Stirs rich and poor and short and tall,
All in a crowd together.
Fashion flits by in her brocatelles
And Beggary walks behind her,
While Folly jingles her merry bells,
And Youth flies past to find her.

And wee ones, aping the larger ton,
Gotten up with wondrous pains,
Make up in furbelows, and so on,
Whatever they lack in trains.
Fair babes in mull and Valenciennes lace,
In the blinding sunlight squirm,
And "mamma" glides with as grand a grace
As if not robed by a worm!

And up and down, in pomp and parade,
Simplicity, decked in satins,
Flirts in this merry masquerade
With wisdom of the Latins.
But suddenly, swiftly, where in the world
Did all this deluge gather?
Where are the blue and the sunshine whirled?
What under the sun ails the weather?

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Ha! ha! a merry old traitor he,
And the votaries of the sun,
In dripping, bedraggled finery,
Acknowledge themselves undone.
The gutters swell to respectable creeks,
The streets to rivers have grown,
While roseate lips and blushing cheeks
At touch of water have flown.

Parasol tiny and lithe rattan,
Bootee of patent leather,
Panama hat and sandal-wood fan,
In arms against the weather.

Rich *poult de soie*, and barège *Anglais*—
Oh what a frightful muddle!
Petticoats tucked and *drap-d'été*,
Fine feathers dipped in a puddle!
Green sunshade over ten-dollar silk,
Is shedding copious tears,
And young Swiss mull, not so white as milk,
Looks much too old for its years.

Ha! presto! change! fly, Jack, and begone!
Fine fashion in *brocatelles;*
Beggary with disfiguring frown,
And Folly with muffled bells;
Flee, one and all, in sorriest plight,
The maskers all together,
Each with a sputtering word of spite
At the sudden change of weather.

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A TENANT'S PETITION TO A LANDLORD,

BY THE OCCUPANT OF A SHUTTERLESS HOUSE.

TO that Unknown whom auction sales have made
A sort of myth or trenchant trick of trade,
I would pour forth, in view of summer-time,
My aggravated woes in rough-shod rhyme;
And were my simple foolscap lute or lyre,
My landlord would its deepest strains inspire.

Perchance this good man never yet has spent
His days in some small dwelling made to rent—
A sort of tea-box with four windows placed
Where hieroglyphics usually are traced,
Unlined by Chinaman's zinc-loving eye
To keep its precious contents cool and dry.
A roof as flat as flattest contradiction,
And ceilings low as some French tale of fiction;
So that we sit beneath them seared and mute,
And see our children turning to dried fruit!

Great cracks hung up on hinges and called doors,
See-saws laid over sleepers and called floors,

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Walls beautified by spots where plaster was,
And lank lath laughing with its broken jaws!
Rooms planned by some one skilled in short division,
Who thought, no doubt, in making this provision,
Tenants, like dishes, if but closely packed,
Run very much less risk of getting cracked;
Yet rent demanded which, in bank-notes small,
Spread on the floor would nicely carpet all.

In such a house for one long year I've borne
The yoke of inconvenience, and I've torn
My silent shoulders with its jagged weight,
And only to myself bemoaned my fate.
I've frozen when it froze, and mouldy grew
When dampness oozed our tomb-like mansion through;
When summer suns their dog-day courses ran,
I've dreamed, at night, that some hot frying-pan
Held my poor frame, and fancied I was fish
Left, cook-forgotten, in my scorching dish.
I've plead for painters—panthers would sooner come;
For masons—my hearers suddenly grew dumb.

I showed the stony walls, with moisture lined,
"The powers that be" grew suddenly stone blind!
Thus, whatsoe'er I've asked for tenant's uses
Has died a natural death of poor excuses.
Finding it was "no kind of use to talk,"
I said, "We will take up our beds and walk;"
Beneath this roof no more my blistered brains
Shall frame their prayers in purgatorial pains;

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Like wandering Arabs we must roam about;
Rest we in rented houses on our route,
Fate and self-preservation cry, "Move out."

Still my resolves quite hard to manage prove;
They are not "balky," but they hate "to move."
With hopeful patience do they turn and say,
"Make the house tenantable—let us stay!"
My landlord, in this most enlightened age,
When solving mysteries is all the rage,
If I should tell what in this building housed
Has these long lines of dull complaint aroused—
If I should tell what ghostly fingers tap
Upon the doors, to spoil my morning nap—
If I should tell what spectres on the roof
Make the tin sheets from shingles spring aloof—
If I should tell what awful sights I see
When sleep has blinded every one but me,
What faces fill the unshuttered window-pane,
I'm sure no tenant would live here again.

Still worse than all, when the long summer day
Its panting heart doth 'neath our roof-tree lay—
When other homes are cool, and blinds of green
Tone down full many a happy family scene,
Laying soft shadows in the parlors neat,
And rendering home completeness more complete—
In this strange house, where breezes never play,
Where noontide lies upon our roof all day,
Where each hot room an inquisition seems
Which fancy fills with tortured victims' screams—
Oh, here—believe me, 'tis no idle tale I make—
Some martyr daily *burneth at the steak.*

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Of these strange things I've borne my silent share,
And told no living being what they are;
  And if, kind landlord, you will grant one plea,
  No mortal e'er shall know of them from me.

In confidence I fain would say, of late
Reports have got abroad about the state
  In which I keep my house. The other day
  I heard my baby had been seen to cry
  Because a grain of dust was in its eye;
And some one said 'twas just my careless way,
I hadn't dusted the poor child that day!
  And then I heard, when we sat down to tea—
  My "gudeman" and my little toddlers three—
Somebody saw the table-cloth was darned,
And of this vulgar fact the village warned,
  And, with a shiver that portended chills,
"This comes of women's meddling with goose-
    quills."
Another said our shadows on the wall
Were not kept perpendicular at all,
  But moved their heads, and rocked them to and fro,
  As well-bred shadows would not do, you know
I'm puzzled how these horrid facts got out,
Who took the time to peddle them about;
  Hosts of good friends had kindly called on me,
  Broken my bread and sipped the cup of tea;
But who the foe that did me this good turn,
Try as I would, was more than I could learn.

I learned at last—discovered how 'twas done.
You see, from morn till even does the sun

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All day walk staring our small windows through,
And finding out each trifling thing we do,
Goes gossiping around among the folks,
And tells our misdemeanors as good jokes.
I've not the least protection from his boldness;
He mocks me when I would repel with coldness.
Now this is rather more than I can bear:
Even sunshine shall not enter here to share
My home and hearthstone, and turn traitor there.

I would like shutters, sir, to keep him out;
I cannot have such ruthless folks about.
Now, if you have the heart to tell me nay,
The worst I wish you is some summer's day,
When suicidal flies fall in the butter,
Yielding the ghost with many a greasy splutter;
When moths grow sick of daylight, and grown brave
Seek in our cup of tea a watery grave;
When one's most cool ideas seem turned to oil,
And one's afraid to keep them lest they spoil;
When melting moods grow rancid in the heat,
And one can scarcely keep his temper sweet,—
Then do I hope, if you resist my plea,
You may be doomed to pass an hour with me,
And in this furnace, seven times heated, learn
How readily do *Blind* delinquents burn!

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MY WORLD.

> The mind is its own place, and in itself
> Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.—MILTON.

I HAVE a world—a world that is mine own;
A realm that teems with all things bright and fair,
That blooms or perishes, exists or dies,
Is sunlit, shadowed, peaceful or at war,
As I may will. It is a changeful world
Whose beauties turn to terrors, and whose joys
Melt into gloom as meteors fade in night.
To-day, the silver cascade's sparkling mirth
With the swift flash of gorgeous bird-wings joins;
The grass is green, and laughing rivulets
Under the weedy banks with shadows play;
While over all the cloudless heavens hang
Like some triumphal arch, beneath whose blue,
In chariot of gold, with flower-twined wheels,
The Princess Royal, Youth, rides down Life's road
Toward the Palace of Futurity.
To-morrow, all things bright and gay have fled;
Stupendous rocks the dark skies seem to bear

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Upon their craggy shoulders. Where the Sun,
Provider prodigal for Earth, his bride,
But yester lavished splendor, all is night
And wild bewildering tumult, while the sea
From the stern shores that manacle its strength
Preaches its solemn sermons.

Tis my will
At times to woo the spirit of the storm,
And wait his coming through the gates of cloud.
The howling winds his lusty heralds are,
Who shriek his advent over moor and main;
While through their clear, æolian trumpets roll—
The breath of tempests and the blasts of woe,
Weaving in weird yet wondrous harmony,
Destruction's battle-march. Mantled in mists,
His angry hands of noisy thunders full,
The livid lightning flashing from his eyes,
His wrathful brow with scowling fury black,
The Storm-king comes—cloud-armies at his back—
A veteran host whose hoary locks have waved
In Nature's conflicts since creation's birth.
The hills, stern in their resignation, yield
Their brows, sunbrowned by ages, to the stroke
Which seeks their hearts. The valleys sob, the rills
Put up a petulant cry, the forest kings
Bow down their lofty heads, rocks crashing fall,
The angered mountains veil their battled fronts,
The billows gnash their teeth; confusion dire
Claps her jubilant hands and Nature's queen,
Earth, the all-beautiful, lifts her wet eyes
In mute appeal, and vanquished lies beneath
Her conqueror's gaze.

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Again, a-wearied grown
With hearing Nature's harp discordant strung,
I turn aside; and lo! the sun rides forth
Serene in splendor through unclouded skies,
And like a royal lover proudly folds
The sorrowing earth in his forgiving arms,
Rebukes the angry seas, and woos the winds
To rest. With gentle touch he fondly lifts
The rose which fell beneath the storm's rough heel,
And with a smile he dries the crushing tears
Out of the lily's overladen heart.
The frailest flower joys at his approach,
And lifts its head to meet his kind caress.
All hail to thee, supernal king of light,
Who thus at once a universe canst sway,
And stoop a daisy's little face to kiss!

I am sole ruler in my world, and make
It calm and lovely, terrible and wild,
To suit my mood. I dwell therein alone,
Amid the hosts of things inanimate,
The only animate one, or I do throng
Its ways with merry feet and joyous hearts,
And forms all grace and gayety, which float
Like zephyrs to my arms, and offer me
The smile of cordial welcome.

Souls are there,
True as eternal truth; and eyes whose light,
Steady as vestal fires, illumes my life,
And hearts whose faithful throbbings echoes are
Of footsteps which crossed over them to death.

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The unforgotten fill familiar nooks,
And still, deep natures, calm as summer lakes,
Offer Love's fragile bark safe anchorage.
There all that's noble in mankind is man's;
And woman's womanliest attributes
Surround her nature like a belt of stars.
There sweet-lipped Sympathy takes up the cross
Of sobbing Sorrow, and her burden shares.
No serpent there e'er writhes beneath the rose,
No love forgets—no friendships fade away.
The good, the true, the beautiful are there;
The triune bright, whose mission is to teach
Earth, after all, is one of heaven's gates.
I can go hence once more among the world,
Whose hidden rocks had wellnigh wrecked my trust
In human kind, with calm, uplifted brow,
A glad forgetfulness of wrongs, a heart
Rejoicing to forget and to forgive,
A spirit schooled to bear.

Thus do I live,
A dweller on the earth, yet by the hand
Of Thought, that mighty and mysterious Prince
Of the fair House of Life, led up above
It and its woes to dream my dreams and sing
My songs in pensive solitude.

Whene'er
The outer world is cruel unto me,
When friends I've loved and trusted changeful grow,
Or when misfortune lays her heavy hand
Upon my brow, and human pangs press hard

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Against my human heart, I hie me here,
To this my inner world, and shutting out
All that may cold or uncongenial seem,
I kneel me down, and lifting up my voice
Broken and full of sobs to Him who rules
All rulers, I pour out my griefs and lean
With all my woes on his consoling breast.
Then doth my world—that world whose stilly shores
Shut out all earthly bleakness—glow with scenes
Of sacred beauty, as we see the walls
Of dim and shadowy cathedrals hung
With scriptural scenes. A warm and tender light,
By rosy clouds subdued, illumes my soul;
And like an organ touched by reverent hands
My heart peals anthems!

Go ye who have endured
The blight of change and sorrow and deceit
Which stains the outer world—go build ye up
A temple fair, an inner world that teems
With all that's pure and true and beautiful;
Where at the foot of its great cross thy life
May kneel and show its wounds, and, healed, arise!
There will ye find a refuge from all ills—
A balm for every pain; in need, enough;
In place of hatred, love; in place of foes,
Friends constant as the stars. So shalt thou find
That calm and all transcendent peace which comes
Of the surrendering of earthly things
To hold unveiled communion with thy God!
And thou wilt find among the silent paths
Many a broken altar of thy life,
Beside whose ruined columns thou wilt bend,

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Not mourning or aggrieved to see it thus,
But thankful that thou didst not lean too long
Upon its weakness. Thou wilt sigh, perhaps,
The thistle and the clambering brier to see
Where thou hadst planted roses, yet thoult feel
That thorns make surer ladders than rose leaves,
With which to scale the great eternal gates.

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KATY DID.

YEARS ago a gentle maiden,
With a heart of love and truth,
And a bosom all unladen
With the sins of modern youth,
Gave her purest, best affection,
Without worldly-wise reflection,
But with hasty heart-selection
To one she loved too blindly—
Too blindly and too well.

And the maiden's mien was simple,
Like the heart within her breast—
Heart where Truth had built her temple—
Heart where Virtue's wings found rest;
Katy was the maiden's name—
Modest name untouched by shame,
Till her winsome lover came,
With young Love's thrilling whisper
Beguiling Katy's ear.

Oh he wooed her and he won her,
As have men before and since;
Spreading luringly before her
All the picture's brightest tints.

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Life he painted well and fairly,
Tempting pencil guiding charily,
And when he besought her warily
To fly with him, she did, she did,
Poor, trusting Katy did.

Far from home and those who loved her,
With his promises so fair,
He to distant scenes removed her;
Then he left her pining there.
Other hearts have blindly trusted;
Other love has, cankering, rusted;
But no mortal, woe-encrusted,
E'er fell a fairer ruin
Than hapless Katy did,

With a woman's adoration
Katy strove to hide the dart,
And with blind infatuation
Pressed it deeper in her heart;
And with weary feet she wandered,
And with aching brow she pondered
On the hopes that she had squandered
For a vision and a falsehood:
Katy did, Katy did.

Back to scenes of early gladness
Katy's heavy footsteps turned—
Love of home, with all her sadness,
In her bursting heart still burned.
But no form sped forth to meet her,
No loved lips were oped to greet her—
Oh, no human flight is fleeter

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Than that which flees from maidens
Who err as Katy did.

Man may smile and fawn and flatter—
Do the wrong so well he can;
Still the world approves, no matter—
He is man, all-potent man—
But let woman's step betoken
That the slightest line is broken
Of the laws the world has spoken,
She finds the cold contumely
That wretched Katy did.

Years o'er Katy's brow did linger
Slowly, sadly, one by one—
Time's unerring, tireless finger
Wrote her race was almost run—
When, one night, while stars were shining
Midnight's dusky form defining
In the moon's pale arms reclining,
She saw a sight of wonder—
Heart-broken Katy did

Lingering by the babbling fountain
Where so often Katy dreamed
Of that home beside the mountain
Where her sun of life first beamed,
Katy saw soft tresses flowing
Round a figure bright and glowing,
While enchantment she seemed throwing
About poor Katy ever—
Sad, silent, Katy did.

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Katy felt it was a fairy,
One of those kind-hearted sprites
Who are drawn to those a-weary
Of the world's accursing blights.
Then the mystic wand was lifted,
And the moonbeams softly drifted
O'er the brow of the heart-rifted
Child of sin and child of sorrow—
Woe-stricken Katy did.

"Mortal," said the fairy being,
"See, thine earthly task is o'er!
Soon from hence wilt thou be fleeing,
Where no grief can visit more.
From thy grave shall spring a mourner
Which, from every leafy corner,
Maiden's ear shall seek to warn her
Of the danger of confiding
In man, as Katy did.

"See, my wand its garb is weaving—
Garb of hue which will not fade,
With no gorgeous tints relieving
Its translucent emerald shade.
When the summer leaves are falling,
When the grave seems coldly calling,
When all mortal hopes are palling,
She'll tell the world what Katy,
Misguided Katy did.

"Dusky hours of autumn charming,
It shall live the leaves among;

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And the hand that seeks its harming
Shall find silence where was song.*
Over all the broad land sweeping,
Shall thy mourning band be weeping,
Singing while the world is sleeping
The cruel wrongs of Katy—
Katy did, Katy did."

As the fairy ceased her speaking,
Lo! a change o'er Katy passed,
And to earth's emmouldering keeping,
Sank her weary form at last.
Then arose a legion, mourning
Shrub and leafy tree adorning,
With their voice of mystic warning,
Monotonously chanting,
"Katy did, Katy did."

When autumnal nights are coming,
When the drowsy earth is still,
Maidens listen for the humming—
Humming rising o'er the hill,
Of the green band swiftly winging
To the dewy boughs, where swinging
They may chime their choral singing,
To tell what hapless Katy,
Katy did, Katy did.

* The Katydid becomes silent when the bough or tree is touched on which it chirps its busy song.

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BRING ME NO CAPTIVE PETS.

BRING me no captive pets! Give back the deer
Its native wilds and its forest shade,
The coolness soft of the shadowed glade,
The far free hills where its home is made,
And the flying herd which it misseth here.
Ay, send him forth where waving branches spread
Their quivering leaves above his antlered head,
Where the fresh streamlet glides to meet the sea;
Bid him go there and feel that he is free!

Bring me no captive pets! Yon prisoned bird
Pines for a flight through the fresh free air,
The cozy nest with its mate to share,
The bending boughs in the valley fair,
And the dancing waves, by the zephyrs stirred.
Go forth sweet bird, thy fetters are a dream,
The lilies bend above thy native stream;
Thy mate, in sadness, waiteth there for thee—
Go seek her side and tell her thou art free!

Bring me no captive pets! The bright gazelle
Weareth, in sorrow, his gilded chain;
He pants for the distant hills again,
The heathery down and the spreading plain,
And the gushing spring of the mountain dell.

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Unbind his chain; although its links be bright,
Its golden glitter bears a bitter blight;
Forth to the far-off forest bid him flee,
With each glad footfall shouting he is free!

Bring me no captive pets! Yon cooing dove
Folds in its prison its docile wing
A suffering, helpless, lonely thing;
Its mute heart yearning in vain to spring
Once more to the feathered flocks of its love.
Bid it away! Bid it go seek the home
Where loved ones linger for the loved to come,
And may each pulse as it speeds onward be
A thrilling throb that whispers it is free!

Bring me no captive pets! The skies above,
The stars that watch o'er the bounding seas,
The earth with its wealth of bloom and breeze,
The birds that sing in the tall green trees,
Are treasures enough for my heart to love.
Chains, though they gilded be, still, still are chains;
The lightest shackles will leave cruel stains:
Enough is ours; alas! why must we see
Fetters on aught that God created free?

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NOVEMBER.

I

AS I sat by my silent hearthstone, alone,
Alone,
Watching a dying ember,
I was startled to hear a deep sigh on the gale,
And I said, Whence cometh that desolate wail?
A voice answered, "Over the lips so pale
Of November."

II.

I shuddered that dreary name to hear
So near;
Closer I drew the ember;
Triumphant had Summer till now held her reign—
September beneath her bright banner lay slain,
October had knelt at her feet on the plain,
But ne'er might she hope the victory to gain
O'er November.

III.

Through all the dark hours, till night went by,
Did I
That doleful sigh remember;
Lo! Summer was dead when the gray morning came,

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And a voice which I shuddered to know was the same,
Said, "I am chief mourner for Summer; my name
Is November!"

IV.

Oh wildly wept Nature over the clay
Which lay
Cold as the brow of December;
And with mournful measure murmured the rills,
And over the earth blew the blast that chills,
While the old artist, Autumn, out on the hills,
Painted November!

V.

Ah, carefully now have I closed my door;
No more
Do I muse over an ember;
I watch from my windows with wakeful eyes,
For the Season's pale sexton, old Winter, to rise,
And in shroud of snow and a coffin of ice,
Bury November.

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FIDELITAS.

COUCHED on a bloomy bank I lay,
Half dreaming, by the lapsing tide;
A form half angel and half fay
I saw float downward to my side.

Her wings ethereal fanned my face,
As down she sank upon her knees;
Her form, full of a dainty grace,
Swayed like a blossom in the breeze.

Her locks, rich in that tint of bronze
That's seen in summer's sundown skies,
Clustered like holy-hearted nuns,
To hide her bosom from my eyes.

Her lips were like a folded bud,
And blossomed sweetly into smiles,
While her blue eyes poured forth a flood
Of radiance like twin starry isles.

Entranced I lay—enraptured gazed—
The bloomy bank, the lapsing tide,
All else forgot, as, half amazed,
I watched the wonder at my side.

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"Born of the wave art thou?" I said,
"Or cam'st thou down from yon bright star
Whose ray a shining path has laid
O'er twilight's fields to the afar?

"Or art the fair embodied dream
Of some lone poet of the earth,
Which, formed to glorify his theme,
Has fled the brain that gave it birth?

"Or art a prisoned secret fled
Some heart-cell, while the traitor Sleep,
Drunk at the Feast of Dreams, betrayed
The sacred charge he had to keep?

"Or faithful Love, that on life's march
Hath wrong and chill and blight withstood?
The jeweled keystone of the arch
That spans perfected womanhood?"

While yet I spake, she seemed to grow
Less and more less in every part,
Till as she knelt beside me, lo!
She was not higher than my heart.

Then came her voice—a tone between
The fall of brook, the note of bird,
The sweetest thing my ear had e'en
In all its listening lifetime heard.

"I am not aught thou'st named," she said;
"No wanderer from the starry side,
No secret from its prison sped,
No deathless love personified.

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"I am a little foundling Fay—
The pet of our good Fairy Queen—
Bathed in a dew-drop every day,
And lodged at night in tent of green.

"She found me many a day ago
Dying beside a daisy dead,
Stretched out beneath a flake of snow
That covered me from feet to head.

"I lived, and kind Titania claims
My life-rewards her every care,
And when some goodly deed she names,
I'm chosen her behest to bear.

"I carry tears to help dissolve
The pangs of dry-eyed Misery's pain;
I make the lamps of hope revolve
Along the shores of life again.

"I bear to sleeping babes the smile
The youthful mother loves to see;
The broken-hearted I beguile
With gleams of golden memory.

"I speak from empty nooks—from chords
Some absent hand has loved to touch;
From withered flowers—forgotten words—
The silent things that say so much!

"Now here my good queen bids me stray
Among the bloom beside the wave,
And offer you whate'er you may
Most, from her store of blessings, crave."

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Then, smiling tenderly, she drew
From out her bosom, ringlet-shaded,
A little lock of hair, I knew
My young love's gentle hands had braided.

"Wilt have thy youth? I stayed its flight,
As swift it sped toward the vast
Unfathomed depths of wrong and right
Regretful mortals call the past!

"'Tis thine—its fields all unexplored,
Its hopes, its dreams; yet calmly choose
Between its doubtful joys restored
And the experience thou must lose!"

I answered: "Tempt me not—so saith
My heart which youth can claim no more
Till life hath crossed the bridge called death,
'Twixt time and the eternal shore!"

"Youth fades," she said, as down I pressed
Upon the braid one burning kiss,
"And all it leaves as dearest, best,
Is oft some trifle such as this;

"So take the hair—it may ensure
Thy heart from some ensoiling stain;
'Tis well to hold some relic pure
Of years that come not back again;

"And name some gift—is't pride of place,
Or wealth's emoluments you crave—
Fame, honor, aught that life can grace
In its slow journey to the grave?"

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I mused: "Wealth? nay, not that I ask;
So often riches make one poor,
And life beneath wealth's golden mask
Goes begging love from door to door.

"Honors and fame? Nay, 'twere to see
Hatreds grow thick about my feet,
And crops of baleful jealousy
Make all existence a defeat."

She said, "Take then prolongèd years,
Beyond life's ordinary span,
With all the ease that old age cheers
And homage from thy fellow-man.

"Thine aged steps I'll shield from strife,
Vexatious troubles keep at bay—
Those petty ills that peck at life
As hungry jackdaws peck at prey."

"Nay! past the verge of usefulness
What verdure can existence crown?
Whilst living I may others bless—
Not longer would I linger on.

"Nor do I tremble as I note
The parting of life's slender thread;
We are but candles Death snuffs out
When it is time to go to bed.

"And what though round us may be cast
That care with tenderest kindness rife,
Despite it all, we die at last
Of that most strange disease called Life.

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"So none of these; and since my birth
Passed by of fairy gift denied,
I claim not for my days on earth
Aught for my vanity or pride.

"Yet, since to give, 'tis granted thee
Aught known to earthly nomenclature,
One boon I ask—restore to me
My olden faith in human nature.

"Root from my heart its growth of rue,
Let simple trust my spirit cheer;
Let me believe all love is true,
And every new-found friend sincere."

"Rash mortal!" so the fairy said—
"It is thy ruin thou'dst invoke;"
Then, as in grief, she bent her head,
And seemed to vanish—I awoke.

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SUNRISE.

A TINT of red in the far east—a gleam
Of gold upon the hills! Upon the sea
A rosy tinge, as if the soft waves blushed
At their oft-whispered farewells to the night.
From gorge, and glen, and cool green valley floats
A pearly mist—earth's grateful incense sent
Upward to Him who said, "Let there be light."

Down in the rose's ruby heart, and deep
In the pure lily's chalice lies the dew—
That holy water gathered by the hand
Of Nature to baptize the new-born day.

The balmy groves quiver with tuneful life,
The silent blossoms bend in fragrant prayer.
Earth slowly smiles, and through the mists which veiled
Her star-watched slumbers, lifts her face like one
Who, half reluctant, wakes from dewy dreams,
And scatters from her hesitating brow
The rosy crown of sleep.

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Lo! in the east
Now gleam the golden lances of the hours;
Gently they put aside Night's sable veil;
The expectant skies glow with a deeper flush;
The waiting waters throb like welcoming hearts:
The monarch comes; earth shouts, the darkness flies,
And Dawn lies fainting in the arms of Day.

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GOD BLESS YOU!

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED TO A. H. S.

GOD bless you—in three words a prayer,
Exalted, fond, devout, sincere—
With health and strength
And days of length,
With joys of youth,
With lips of truth,
With heart that nobly beats to do
As you'd have others do to you,
God bless you!

God bless you on the land or sea,
Where'er a wanderer you may be—
With days of peace,
With wealth's increase;
With life that shames
Degenerate aims;
With heart kept holy in His sight,
With hand that's brave to do the right—
God bless you!

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God bless you, as your life descends
Time's hillsides steep, with faithful friends;
With lot well cast,
With faith steadfast;
With will to bless
Those favored less;
With strength to reach yon realm of bliss—
Better and brighter far than this—
God bless you!

Digitized by Google

MALVINA.

I NEVER cross the well-known portal
Where erst thy glance of love met mine
But winging back from spheres immortal,
Thy radiant young face seems to shine.

I seem to hear thy voice in greeting,
To feel thy soft hand clasping mine;
I seem to hear thy lips repeating
The welcomes of the old "lang syne."

Thy books still keep their olden places,
The flowers that loved thy girlish care
Toward the sunlight lift their faces,
And seem to ask if thou art there.

There are thy dainty vase and volume,
Thy favorite nook and vacant chair;
Thy bird-cage by the ivied column,
The pathway to thy place of prayer!

Each toy thy girlish fancy treasured
For thy dear sake is cherished still;
And though the tomb thy form hath measured,
Thy hallowed home it yet doth fill.

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Thy voice in every room seems ringing,
Thy footsteps echo in each hall,
And thine own smile to life seems springing
Forth from thy portrait on the wall.

Call ye this death? Nay; though thy brightness
Lost may be, and beauty fled,
Though hushed thy young heart's happy lightness,
And dumb thy lips, thou art not dead!

Thou art not dead; nay, though the preacher
"Dust unto dust," so truly saith,
There is a higher, holier Teacher
Saying, "Tis slumber and not death."

Digitized by Google

THE BABY.

SHE is the blithest, brightest bird,
The sweetest, winsomest little fay,
That e'er a loveless bosom stirred
To own affection's potent sway.

Her locks are sunshine softly curled
Above a brow they love to kiss;
Her eyes, twin stars from other world,
Wandering in wonder over this.

Her cheeks are ruddy, sweet and fair,
Where dimples play at hide-and-seek;
Her lips bright shores of gladness, where
Rejoicing waves of laughter break.

For home she's one continual song—
A sunny dispellant of care;
A star, a joy where troubles throng;
To earth a heaven—to heaven a prayer.

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TO AN OLD PORTFOLIO.

TO-DAY I broke the clasp—the key was gone—
Lost years ago, with hopes and pleasures known;
When friendships sat so thickly on life's brim
I thought to miss none that o'erflowed the rim;
When glowed the wine and foamed life's ruddy cup,
'Twas then I locked this old portfolio up.

To-day I opened it—'twas like the gloom
Which bursts from out the long-unopened tomb,
Where dust and ashes but remain to tell
That here we wept o'er what we loved too well:
Relics of dead or dear ones living yet—
Of friends forgot, or whom we would forget.

Here were old letters stained and dim with age,
Some marked with teardrops upon every page;
Some gay and graceful as wood-flowers in June,
Some dark with clouds which gathered ere life's noon.
All breathe of loves which on youth's altar lay—
All tell of loves for ever passed away.

Here were sweet songs—friendship's devoted lays,
Ringing reminders of departed days,

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Stilled are the hearts that to their music beat,
Silent the tones that chimed their cadence sweet:
The earnest souls that tuned them with the just,
The loving lips that sang them turned to dust!

Here are some flowers tied up with ribbons blue,
The roses withered, ribbons mouldering too;
And at my touch they crumbled into dust,
Like earthly hopes wherein we've placed our trust.
There was no record of the giver's name,
And treacherous memory told not whence they came.

Friendships and flowers and hopes of early days,
All, all have faded from my yearning gaze!
In vain I weep, deplore them—all in vain;
The Past yields up our loved ones not again.
Of mine there's but a memory and a tear,
Or links, such as this old portfolio here.

Alone I'm left to turn these treasures o'er,
Pieces of wreck cast up on Time's cold shore—
Hopes that sailed in them, joys that bounded on,
Lie buried in the ocean of Bygone.
Of all that formed the young and joyous train,
My blighted heart and hopes alone remain.

Who will he be that in some time to come,
When this poor heart and these my lips are dumb,
Will sit him down o'er pages I have writ,
By lamps of love my burning brain hath lit,
To read my records, mixed with memory's lees,
And feel o'er them what I now feel o'er these?

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SOMEBODY.

A LITTLE bit of mystery I try to solve in vain—
Like some tormenting problem again and yet again;
In day-time and in night-time doth its hidden meaning vex me,
Compelling me to love the more the more it doth perplex me.

Entranced I hear my startled heart beat out its quick alarms,
Swift would I fly—each avenue is sentried by her charms;
Like some enchanted circle, round my daily path they spread;
Across the mystic brink of flowers I do not seek to tread.

With smiles for me and frowns for me, beguiling and misleading—
Sad for to-day, to-morrow gay, advancing and receding:
Olden story ne'er embodied more bewitching, 'wildering doubt—
No name I give the mystery; dear reader, find it out.

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A MEMORY.

SOFTLY o'er my senses stealing,
Gliding like deep waves of feeling
O'er my soul,
Comes a dream that sparkles brightly
As the tears that tinkle lightly
Where they roll.

Long ago, when I was roving
With a heart attuned to loving
Faithfully,
Ere I knew the stain that sweepeth
Over souls the wide world keepeth
Chained yet free—

I beheld a lovely maiden,
With a spirit lightly laden,
Full of joy:
In her cheeks bright blushes tingling,
With her mirth a music mingling,
Sans alloy.

Hers a brow like summer morning,
With the floating clouds adorning

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Its sweet light;
Hers the glances like the gleaming
Of the early sunshine, beaming
Mildly bright.

Hers the lips like dewy roses,
When the shade of evening closes
Daylight's doors;
Hers a breath like fragrant clover,
When the summer winds sweep over
Balmy moors.

Hers a cheek carnation-tinted,
And with dazzling dimples dinted;
While a smile
Round her rosy mouth was playing,
Peeping through the ringlets straying,
All the while.

Oh, I loved her with a madness
Which my nature's truest gladness
Has undone!
Trustingly my heart believed her,
Never word or deed deceived her—
Never one.

Youth flew forward, fondly dreaming;
True was every outward seeming,
Till one day
Sorrow his light course arrested,
Met him boldly and broad-breasted
On his way.

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Then I learned, all broken-hearted,
That the glorious links were parted
Of our love;
And I strove with bitter sadness
To forget my fleeted gladness—
Madly strove.

Years have passed since last I met her—
Passed in striving to forget her,
All in vain.
Even now I would believe her,
And with welcoming arms receive her
Once again.

Oh when once we yield to loving,
To that power so sweetly moving,
And so strange,
We may woo the world's caressing,
We may win its worthless blessing,
But not change;

For when once the chain has bound us,
When for once those links are round us,
We in vain
May the fetters seek to sever;
They will fester there for ever
In sweet pain.

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LINES TO CORA.

THEY will never come back, the bright beautiful days,
The gladdening days of the glorious spring
With its blossoming crocus and jessamine sprays
And its verdure that comes o'er the land like a king;
They are fleeing for ever; the freshness and bloom
Of these sun-lighted days of the years of thy life,
Like dreams dreamt on pillows of precious perfume
They fade ere thou knowest with what glory they're rife.

But say you the summer is coming anon,
Its gardens all flush with ripe beauty and splendor,
With its harmonies grander than those that are gone,
With its sunshine more brilliant, its shadows more tender?
Dost thou say that its voices are richer in meaning,
The fruit that is mellow more luscious than bloom,
The harvest that's golden and ripe for the gleaning
Worth all of the spring's evanescent perfume?

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Ah! love—'tis the seed sown in spring-time that grows
To spangle with blossoms the summer's green glade;
'Tis the sapling of spring whose maturity throws
Over summer's hot pulses the cool cloak of shade;
And the harvest that's golden, the fruit that is red,
And the gushes of song on the summer day's track,
Are the precious results of a spring that has sped,
Which will never come back—which will never come back.

Say'st thou autumn will come when the summer is gone,
With the purple and gold that embroider its glory,
And the song of the vintager greeting the dawn,
While with blood of the grape the winepress is gory?
Dost thou say that the full-handed autumn can tender
Such riches as spring-time nor summer e'er knew,
While the gorgeous skies and the forests of splendor
Are rarer than roses and richer than dew?

Remember that spring and its sunny caress,
Its welcoming warmth and its fostering mould,
Is the source of all this that thy autumn can bless,
Its clusters of purple, its harvests of gold!
For the stalk yielding grain and the grape yielding wine,
And the fruit-laden orchards old autumn must lack,
Were it not for the tendrils of spring's early vine
And the seeds of a season that never comes back.

Then gather now, darling, the delicate bloom
Of the crocus and jasmine and clambering rose;
Extract from their petals the precious perfume,
Thy life to embalm as it draws to a close;

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Scatter seeds while the days of thy years are but few,
Broadcast upon intellect's nourishing mould,
That the sunshine of youth and its fostering dew
May yield thee a harvest of beauty untold.

For the spring-time of youth quickly fadeth away
And the swift summers perish on time's sterile shore;
All the autumn's rich glory fast falls to decay
And winter's chill hillsides are ours—nothing more.
But if in the seed-time thou'st planted aright,
For each season of life shall some blessing arise,
Till the Spring-time Eternal shall bloom on thy sight,
And thy wandering feet roam the star-sprinkled skies.

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THE SLAUGHTERED CRANE.

'TWAS summer, and the noonday sun shone down
With burning fervor on the land and sea;
The wandering winds had sung themselves to sleep,
And hid their folded pinions in the haunts
Which no man knows. The clouds lay furled away
Like useless sails upon a bark becalmed;
And not a shadow crossed the blazing sky,
Which spread itself unbrokenly away,
One boundless breadth, monotonously blue.
There was no hum of life in grassy depths,
The cheery chirr of grasshopper was hushed,
The butterfly hung idle on the rose,
And insects slumbered in the sleepy flowers.
The pasturing herds their fragrant food resigned,
And sought the sluggish pools or cooling shade,
While woolly flocks laid down their fleecy forms
In drowsy rest beneath widespreading trees.
There was a weighty silence in the air—
A hush that awed, a quiet that oppressed.
Not even a steepled bell swung out its tones
To break the stillness of the Sabbath noon;
And Nature, like the olden Magi, bowed
In prostrate worship to her god, the sun.

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Parching with thirst, a scorned and lonely bird
Deep in the forest shadows songless sat.
No gentle gale his burning bosom cooled,
No scented breeze beguiled his idle wings.
The very denseness of the leafy shade
Shut out the air for which he drooped and pined.
He stretched his slender neck and gazed abroad:
He saw bright fields of grain and glassy streams,
The spicy swamp, the clover-sprinkled plain,
And, tempted by their peaceful loveliness,
He poised himself, then flapped his heavy wings,
And rising lazily upon the air,
Soared from the wooded depths away, away.
His flight was far, and for his wearied wing
He sought at last some quiet resting-place.
An elm stood near which reared its branches high
And o'er the stream which slumbered at its base
Cast a refreshing shade. With one swift swoop
He sank among the thick inviting leaves,
And folded there his wings. The uncouth bird,
With harsh, discordant note and plumage dull,
In his own ugliness secured from harm,
Contented felt, and with confiding trust
Stroked his coarse plumes, or plucked with busy beak
His ruffled pinions, while with yearning note
He wooed his mate to follow him.

Alas!
Is earth so full of guilt there is no room
For innocence to sleep unguarded there?
Is Wrong so ready and is Might so strong
That Peace must always rest upon her arms?

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A shadow, human in its shape, swept o'er
The steely mirror of the silent stream;
A cautious step crept o'er the burning sand,
A searching eye the lonely bird descried;
Then, swift as thought, the deadly rifle ball
Sped through the Sabbath sunshine to its grave
In that poor heart!

With one wild cry of woe,
Which seemed to call on Heaven to note the deed,
The doomed bird fluttered to the ground and died!
With trembling wing back to the distant wood
Swift sped his widowed mate. The wild green hills,
Her only sympathizers, sent her cries
Re-echoed from their hardy hearts, while far,
Through dark ravines and caverns cold, where clung
The deadly nightshade and the hissing snake,
The rattling echo of the merciless shot
Crept, like a murderer, away and hid!

"Ye shall no murder do"—"Thou shalt not kill!"
Tell us, ye angels who the records keep
Of right and wrong, the meaning of these words?
Is not life, life? Are brain and heart-throb, love,
Ambition, hope, grief's weight and joy's keen thrill,
Not life in creatures dumb, but life in kings?
If to take life be not to kill, then why
To slaughter tyrants is it to murder do?
Vouchsafe, ye guardians who the secrets hold
Of heaven and earth in your mysterious hands,
To once define that undiscovered line
Where righteous justice ends and crime begins.

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What worth was that dead bird to him who drew
The red blood from its palpitating heart?
What prize in those gray shattered pinions lay?
What gain that blood-stained beak which bit the dust
To him who laid it low? No hungered lips
Had plead for feathered prey; no famished frame
Could feed its human life on this foul flesh;
No victim science claimed like this: the shelves
Of curious cabinets would but have scorned
To add to far-found treasures such a thing!
The very food which gave its homely form
Fuel to keep alive its vital flame,
From wormy wood or miry morass plucked,
Made it a worthless offering to lay
Upon the dainty shrine of appetite.
If justice sees in cruelty no crime,
Then be destruction's wanton heel unbruised!

Why take away with thoughtless stroke the life
Thou canst not give again? If 'tis thy right
To kill, 'tis easily done; but though thy hand
May mountains move and valleys turn to hills,
Or shackle seas or bridge a universe,
Thou canst not life bestow upon a worm.
Though humble be the harmless thing that crawls
Confiding to thy feet, why crush it out?
Because its state seems lowly in thy sight
Or its existence worthless, must it die?
'Tis not for us to know its mission here.
The tiniest insect in its cell remote
Fulfills its purpose in the wondrous chain
God forged at the creation. Not a heart
Which beats but has its throbbings linked within

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Some other heart, and has, perchance, a home
As sacred to its wordless loves as shrines
By man held dear. By thine own altars then,
By all those ties to thee the tenderest,
Beware what thou dost render desolate!
Pause ere thou lay'st a finger on a pulse
To still its throbs! Withdraw thy hand in awe
Lest thou, in killing wantonly, should steal
Thy Maker's treasures; for the breath of life
The hand and seal of God the Father is.

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THE ORGAN-GRINDER.

A WEARY man he sought my door—
A worn old man, ill-clad and poor—
Who on his bending shoulders bore
The means of his subsistence.
An organ, old and quavering,
Like him who raised his voice to sing,
Accordant with the jarring thing
Which earned him his existence.

An aged man, with locks all white
As snow on lofty Alpine height,
And features covered with the blight
Of time and crushing sadness:
With feeble steps he came alone,
And cast his heavy burden down,
Then begged me, in his flattering tone,
"Be gracious in thy gladness."

I gave him there to drink and eat;
Then rising from his lowly seat,
With heavy foot the time he beat
And tuned his voice for singing;

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Far through the vacant village street
His untrained voice rang wild and sweet,
While every cadence seemed replete
With memories it was bringing.

For, as he sang, the trickling tears
Coursed through the wrinkles of his years—
Heart rain that swept the silent biers
Of long-departed pleasures;
And still he sang with trembling tone
Of friends he'd loved and joys he'd known,
There in the twilight dim, alone,
In soft and mournful measures.

He sang of one sequestered spot
Across the sea, where stood the cot
Where first, in childhood's hour, he sought
A mother's fond caressing;
He told how shattered fortunes led
His steps afar to earn his bread;
And as he paused I bent my head
And craved the old man's blessing.

For age and sorrow and white hair
Ennobling toil and chastening care,
The bishop's gown and mitre are
Upon God's broken-hearted.
Humbly his benediction fell,
Then came a faltering farewell,
Lost in the peals of vesper bell—
The minstrel had departed.

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TO BABY LILY.

I.

GO bring me of blossoms the brightest and best,
Those jewels of Nature that grow on her breast;
Bring bird-songs of warblers that flash through the groves
Where the first of all lovers repeated their loves;
Bring voices of billows in joyous commotion;
The purest of pearls from the gem-beds of ocean:
Bring all that is rarest and fairest to lay
At the feet of the Lily that blossomed in May.

II.

Go bring me, of spring-time, her daintiest breath;
Imprison the dewdrops that jewel the heath;
Go gather ye here from earth's loftiest height,
Still gilded with star-beams, morn's earliest light;
Go bring from eternity's threshold a beam
Of unquenchable radiance ever to gleam
On the wandering footsteps, wherever they stray,
Of Lily, our Lily, that blossomed in May.

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III.

Bring hither some tankard unbought and unsold,
More shining than silver and purer than gold,
Whose wave-polished brim no mortal hath tasted,
Whose contents divine no rude hand hath wasted;
Scooped out from some shell of the cavernous deep,
In the brightest of crystal its rosy rim steep;
Let heaven's best beam on the bright waters play,
And we'll drink to the Lily that blossomed in May.

IV.

Go bring me bright dreams for an innocent pillow,
Faith steadfast and strong for life's dangerous billow;
Bring trust in the Highest through surges of sorrow;
Bring strength for to-day and sweet hope for to-morrow;
A vigilant soul, while the tender heart dreams
By youth's starry meadows and sunshiny streams:
Bring every best blessing to lovingly lay
On the brow of our Lily that blossomed in May.

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THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

FANCY.

HARK to those footsteps in the hall,
That step upon the stair!
Heard ye that hand against the wall?
The shriek that echoed there?

FACT.

'Twas but the wind that crept between
The crevices and cracks;
The ghost has never yet been seen
That faced the fire of facts.

FANCY.

Nay, nay; 'twas not the wind. Behold
The door-knob slowly turns!
Perhaps some spirit sad and cold
For this bright fireside yearns.
And list! upon the outer door
Didst hear that heavy knock?
The old house shook from floor to floor
In answer to the shock.

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FACT.

Nonsense! Imagination's hand
Alone the latch did lift;
Reason and sense both laughing stand,
Such idle whims to sift.
The knock upon the outer door
Was some lone cartwheel's jar,
Or watchman's rattle; nothing more
Than all such knockings are.

FANCY.

Tell me not so—night after night,
Up, up the winding stair,
With flickering lamp and robe all white,
And wild, disheveled hair,
I see a pallid figure wind
With silent step and slow,
With withered roses loosely twined
About her brow of snow.

FACT.

Some solid supper tells that tale
Eaten 'twixt twelve and one—
Some wretched pickle steeped in ale
Or roastbeef over done.
These are the spades that dig men's graves—
Such hands our death-bells ring—
Oh souls are body's veriest slaves
Where appetite is king!

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FANCY.

Nay, trust me, 'tis a haunted house
In which I've come to dwell;
No wind, no pickle, mug or mouse
So dire a tale could tell.
From cellar damp to garret high,
All through the night hours lone,
Strange footsteps fall, strange voices sigh,
Or sob, or shriek, or groan!

FACT.

A haunted stomach, mark me well,
Holds all the ghosts you see:
Oysters and wines thrown in pell-mell
With coffee and with tea.
Up, down through dim intestinal hall
Some turkey's leg may stalk,
And wonder where in distant thrall
Its lonely mate doth walk.

Some partridge, too, all marred and pale
May make its wretched way
Through cabbage and cucumbers stale,
Which seem inclined to stay.
And vinegar, well spiced and sour,
Shudders to stand between
The milk-punch of the last half hour
And custard made of cream.

Hence springs your sprite with troubled hair,
Your demons grim and gray;

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The gibbering ghosts which grin and glare,
And which no priest can lay.
Nay, Fancy, prythee do not speak;
Thy rein must now be slacked;
Thou may'st not lay thy dainty cheek
'Gainst the rough beard of Fact.

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TO MY SISTER.

MISS me sometimes! There'll be a vacant place,
My own sweet sister, where so long I've been;
There'll be an empty chair, another face
By thy fond side where I've so oft been seen.
In the long coming years may memory's chimes
Ring up kind thoughts of me. Miss me sometimes!

Miss me sometimes! When mirth and music reign
Throughout these scenes which I have loved so well!
Oh miss me then! for never here again
With the clear chorus will my glad voice swell.
My footsteps then will roam in other climes,
Far from this cherished spot. Miss me sometimes!

Miss me sometimes, and fondly love me still;
My heart, like mountain summit bleak and bare,
Can bravely front the stormy clouds that chill
If far beyond the gloom, undimmed and fair,
I know thy star of love unclouded climbs
To shine on me as now. Miss me sometimes!

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My eager soul has dreamed—ay, madly dreamed—
Of honors and the glory that fame brings;
But it has found life is not what it seemed,
And honor, fame, unsatisfying things.
Between the leaves of my young life lie pressed,
Like withered flowers, the hopes it treasured best.

My aspirations long since died; this brow
'Neath Disappointment's bitter sting still smarts;
And all the monuments I ask for now
Are monuments of love in human hearts.
Oh rear, sweet sister, in thy heart for me
Something like this to live eternally.

And now farewell! Oh may our Father's hand
Brighten thy path with every kindly gift;
And angel guardians in the starry land
From thy fair brow untimely sorrows lift.
Farewell, farewell; ah! sister mine, when chimes
Memory's vesper, miss me thou wilt sometimes.

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WAITING.

DREARILY burns the fire in the grate;
The wind is high and the hour is late,
But, lovingly here I sit and wait
For a step I long to hear.

The night is cold and the wind is high,
But the moon is full and round in the sky,
Lighting the path which my love comes by
My desolate heart to cheer.

The air is chill and the stars are few,
On yonder plains of infinite blue,
While I wait for the lover fond and true
Who is coming by and by.

Swift clouds are hurrying over the night,
But what care I for the threatening sight?
Though the moon be dark, the eye is bright
Which is coming by and by.

Though thunders roll, upon his breast
My head shall sink in happy rest,
Like a birdling's, hid in quiet nest
From the storm-king's angry eye.

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MY GRANDSIRE'S WATCH.

A TIMEPIECE old, yet worn and weary never,
It hangs, a relic, by the bed-room door;
With ceaseless ticking thus it sayeth ever:
"Years fourscore and more
I've told time's steady, steady progress o'er."

I saw it first when for my childhood's pleasure
My grandsire held it to my wondering ear,
And bade me listen while its busy measure
Said to me pleasantly,
"Merry, merry hours I'm marking for thee here."

The good man died; still the old watch kept ticking,
And as they hung it by the bedroom door
I lingered there to hear its ceaseless clicking
Saying o'er, "Years fourscore
Have borne him hence for ever, ever more."

I listened to it as my own years hastened
To mingle with the memories of the past,
And even then my yearning heart was chastened
To hear it say, "Hastening away
Is youth's bright morn whose sunshine cannot last!"

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In that same spot, when my full heart was darkened
By heavy clouds of changeful after-years,
With stricken soul to its clear voice I hearkened—
"Hopes and fears, births and biers:
Such is this life—a scene of smiles and tears."

And when my best of earthly hopes were scattered,
And graveyard gloom hid those I held most dear,
I turned, with all my fondest heart-ties shattered,
To hear that voice saying, "Rejoice,
Thine own time cometh—naught is eternal here."

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UMBRÆ.

I.

TICK, tick, so the pulse of Time
In its solemn monotony throbs;
And away on the hills with a woe that chills,
The dying storm-blast sobs and sobs,
Like the heart of penitent crime.

II.

The winds rush over the moor
Like steeds that have never been tamed,
And through years to-night of mildew and blight,
Raps, raps at my heart's closed door,
A love that has never been named.

III.

I gaze at the starlit sky,
That bewildering poem of God,
And my heart keeps time to a sweet old rhyme,
Learned 'mid the asters and golden-rod
Of an autumn long gone by.

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IV.

Out of the wreck of my life,
Floats up a young face that is fair—
Young and transgressing and unconfessing:
I see it floating, floating there,
Amid the billowy strife.

V.

Life was a dream when we met,
Luxurious, balmy and bright;
She wandered away ere yet the full day
Had taught me man's most ennobling right
Is to forgive and forget.

VI.

I buried her out of sight,
'Neath the sods of my passing years;
And rolled a stone 'gainst the sepulchre lone,
Where, shrouded in manhood's manliest tears,
My love lay cold and white.

VII.

But oft and again as now
That love which I never have named
From the past will come with its young heart dumb,
And the red, red lips which never blamed
Seem lingering on my brow!

VIII.

Who looketh not back sometimes
Through the valley of vanished years,
Nor longs for the power, for one short hour,

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To efface some step, to dry some tears,
Some requiems change to chimes?

IX.

Could I but beckon her back,
Could she see me owning the shame
That sent her adrift with no one to lift
The dust from her tarnished name,
The stones from her young life's track;

X.

Then, then to its life of woe,
Could I yield my desolate heart,
And welcome the stroke that another's broke
When the fiat went forth for us to part
In that autumn long ago!

XI.

Shame on my wretched pride,
Shame on my cowardly soul,
Which so feared the world it madly hurled
A woman out on its dangerous shoal,
Nor knew if she lived or died.

XII.

Yet gazing on yonder sky,
That mystical poem of God,
I seem to behold, through the gates of gold,
My lost one laying her grievous load
At the feet of Christ on high.

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GERTRUDE.

GERTRUDE! A few brief weeks ago, how linked
With joy this name! It was in mirthful hours
A melody—sunshine in clouded moods,
In saddened hours a prayer. "Gertrude," we cried,
And she we loved came flying to our arms
On friendship's wings, and laid her hands in ours,
And gave us smiles and gentle words, and stood
Beside the weary sufferer's couch of pain,
Like some mild star whose gentle radiance beams
On evening's cloud.

Her daily deeds were like
The flowers which children scatter in the path
Of brides—so pure, so fresh; and where there grew
A thorn, she meekly kept it for herself
And gave the rose away!

As pilgrims seek
Some consecrated shrine, so came the poor
To her, and poured their sorrows at her feet—
With ready hand she ministered to want
While her young lips did feed the hungry heart,
And clothe the naked, trembling soul with God's
Blest promises.

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And little ones—those gems
Which Jesus scatters from his crown for us
To gather and replace therein—whose hearts
Beat so much nearer heaven than our own—
Lavished their spotless love, as if they saw
And recognized in her the shining face
Of one but straying here from Paradise.
A goodly thing it is to know of one
That little children loved her.

Alas! for us,
Death came! Death, the pale sculptor! Pitiless,
He pressed the lips, and they were ice; he touched
The brow, and it was marble; laid his hand
Upon the heart, and it was still for aye.
The friend we loved, our fairest and our best,
He saw and chilled into a statue.

"Gertrude!"
No more to us a name! A monument
Erected in our hearts, it stands for all
That's purest, brightest, best. Around its base
Memories cluster like forget-me-nots,
And love its apex crowns with *immortelles.*
When we would bring to mind the holy type
Of life, of beauty, innocence and worth,
Of noble attributes and lofty aims,
Of Christian meekness and unswerving faith,
Of rarest self-forgetfulness and deeds
Of saint-like goodness,—when we fain would rest
Our broken hearts on holy ground like this,
Then, then, we whisper, "Gertrude!"

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"YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN."*

"NOT forgotten," "not forgotten!"
Those words sweep o'er my heart
With all the sunny brightness
Which remembrance can impart.
"Not forgotten!" Oh there's music
In those kindly words for me,
And ever through their sweet refrain
Float memories of thee.

How pleasantly come back to me
Hours fleeted long ago;
When eyes were bright and hearts were light,
And spirits pure as snow;
When merry lips trilled merry songs,
And every heart was gay,
And you and I went laughingly
Along youth's rosy way!

How joyously we feasted Life
And crowned him merry king,
When apple trees were full of bloom,
And the robins welcomed spring!

* From a friend's letter.

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The blood that made our young hearts beat
Was then a rushing tide,
Which every brightness reveled in,
And every grief defied.

The summer eves were blissful then,
The summer days were long;
The woods seemed full of bluest birds,
The sunshine full of song.
"Forgotten!" No, but life has grown
For both so earnest now,
And sadder things than flowers are fixed
Upon each other's brow!

But here's to thee! There still exists
A bright spring in my heart,
Which fills a cup of love for thee,
Dear friend, where'er thou art;
And wheresoe'er fate marks thy path,
By mountain, plain or sea,
May early joys and early friends
Still unforgotten be!

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ODE TO THE "MOTHER HUBBARD" OF A FANCY-DRESS BALL.

MOST quaint and meritorious dame,
Who bears that fond maternal name
To childish memory dear,
Permit a simple quill of goose
Enthusiastic thoughts to loose,
And eulogize thee here.

What heart that loves the happy past,
What eye that backward loves to cast
A glance to bygone days,
But Mother Hubbard's title speaks
With glistening eyes and glowing cheeks,
And lips that love to praise?

'Mid all the gay and gladsome throng
Of ladies fair and courtiers strong,
Within the festive hall.
Thy quaint and picturesque attire,
Thy ready wit and soft satire,
Were winsomest of all.

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Though England's proud and haughty queen,
With kings and princes seldom seen,
  Adorned the motley crowd,
Each heart forgetful of all these,
Down upon Memory's bended knees
  To Mother Hubbard bowed.

We wonder not that at thy shrine
Thy wondrous friend of class canine,
  Long wrecked on storied strand,
As the dear object of thy love,
So blest, should quite distracted prove,
  And not know how to stand.

Full many a wight of present day
To hear thy generous lips but say
  Not every hope was dead,
Would daily dance a merry jig,
Don any sort of martial rig,
  Or stand upon his head!

Dear dame! May thy life's cupboard be
For ever filled most plenteously
  With every blessing known;
And when some knight shall seek to share
Thy woman's love and woman's care,
  Refuse him not a bone!

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MY BIRTH-DAY.

I.

A PILGRIM on Time's silent shore,
I rest my weary feet to-day—
Look back upon the nevermore,
The sun which always gilds the yore,
And sound my harp's lone lay.

II.

Here at the feet of youthful years
I strike the half-regretful strings—
Sound the soft strain which gently clears
Away the mistiness of tears
Fond memory ever brings.

III.

To-days I've known and ceased to know
Rise fast on my reverted gaze,
While like retreating armies go
The hours I never more may know,
To join my yesterdays.

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IV.

Yet why should I be sad? Behold
My silky locks are brown as yet;
No silver shining 'mid their gold,
No lines upon my forehead scrolled,
Though Time and I have met;

V.

Ay, often met before to-day,
For I Time's tenant am while here;
And he, before his house of clay,
Raps regularly for his pay
On rent-day, once a year.

VI.

His clear receipt in heavy hand
Stands traced on every brow that lives;
All other debts for house or land
We may with bold affront withstand,
But Time no credit gives.

VII.

I paid, to-day, the annual rent,
But paid it with a bitter sigh;
'Tis gold I grieve to feel is spent—
Gold from a gracious Giver sent
To spendthrifts such as I!

VIII.

But let my rested feet move on,
My pilgrimage not yet is o'er;

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No more I'll mourn the glories gone,
But with my new to-morrow's dawn
  Resume my road once more.

IX.

Dashed from my cheek be every tear,
  Each shadow from my spirit cast;
What though upon the Past's gray bier
The corpse of still another year
  Lies in its shroud at last?

X.

'Tis but a warning touch of pain
  Upon my careless brow at best—
A seeming loss, a certain gain—
One link removed from that long chain
  Which leads to endless rest.

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ACROSTIC.

A BREATH, a thought, a cloud that flies
Perfumed with reveries toward the skies;
Rolling in purple mists away
In paths where man may never stray.

Melting our passions into calm,
Excelling Gilead's magic balm,
Here wakes our bliss—here dies our grief—
A whole existence in a leaf!

Vapor and fragrance, ashes, dust;
A joy serene, a dream to trust;
Niched in thy fires our visions read,
A world, a hope, a heaven, a weed!

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THE BOX OF OLD SHOES.

A COBBLER dwelt in an Eastern town,
And a busy old man was he,
He worked from morn till the sun went down,
With his lapstone on his knee.
Little recked he of the world without—
Its bustle and bother and din—
He cared not a fig what folks were about,
If their "custom" he gathered in.

All the day long his hammer and awl
And bristled "wax-end" he plied;
Nor thought of his neighbors great or small—
Who was born, who wedded, who died.
And time wore on with him stitching there
On "upper" and "siding" well "soled"
Till his empty pockets no more were bare,
But jingled with musical gold.

Then a larger shop became his desire,
And straight did he set about
To widen the floor and raise the roof higher,
And move the old rubbish out.

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And thus he discovered a box all grim
With the dust and the dirt of years,
And he opened it, out in the daylight dim,
With a pair of shoemaker's shears.

"Gad!" cried he, "here's a box of old shoes,
Good for nothing at all I s'pose—
Here's little and big and great and small,
Old-fashioned and worth not the prick of my awl:
They're the refuse work of some earlier year,
All dusty and mouldy; I vow 'tis queer
That so long in my snug old shop they'd be,
Unnoticed and wholly forgot by me.

"I'll set them out by the old shop door;
They'll do for a sign if nothing more;
It's a pretty good lot to be wasted so,
But then what better thing can I do?"
Just here a thought struck the old man's pate:
With pen and ink he fulfilled it straight,
And nailed this bill on his box of shoes:
"Folks who want 'em are welcome to choose."

Well pleased he felt in his heart's kind fount
That "loss" had thus turned to "good account,"
And he thought how many a foot now bare
Could cover its shivering nakedness there;
And he worked away that whole day long,
Smiles on his lips or a snatch of song,
For he felt so many in sorry need
Could a blessing reap from his humble deed.

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But his *friends* came by and read the bill,
Then into the box turned their greedy eyes,
And with eager fingers they searched until
They found for themselves a suitable "size."
They stamped about with sneer and frown
To see if they fitted their own feet quite,
And they swore they did as they laced them down,
Albeit they were "a trifle too tight."

Then with angered lips they shouted loud:
"Here's an insult, zounds! we none will bear;
This man's getting rich and waxing proud,
And thinks his grim old rubbish *we'll* wear!
They were meant for us sure! behold how they fit—
Though perhaps they do a trifle squeeze.
Odds! bristles! his crazy old pate we'll split
For daring to offer us cast-offs like these!"

Then relatives came who heard he was rich—
They never had known him in Poverty's door—
And thought they'd look in now to see him stitch,
And perhaps catch a drop as his fortunes ran o'er.
But they caught the cry his friends had raised,
And tall and short and fat and slim,
Each vowed a "size" he was "sore amazed,"
To find in that box expressly for him.

Then, arming themselves with a goodly load
From the labeled box outside the door,
They into the cobbler's premises strode,
Where, singing, he hammered his lap-stone o'er.

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As up he rose, surprised at the crowd
Of kindred and friends in his presence meek,
They knocked him down, and vehemently vowed
Not an impudent word would they let him speak.

In vain he strove in his wild despair
T' explain the "case" in the way it stood;
But they banged and beat him, and all did swear
Not a word should he say, they'd be shod if he should.
So with merciless blows was he overthrown—
The blood from his body did slowly ooze,
And he gave up the ghost with a mouldy moan,
Falling dead 'neath his lot of dusty shoes.

Thus the kind intent of a generous heart
Was turned to ill in that angry mood,
And the shoemaker's body beaten apart
By the very weapons he wielded for good.
How oft, as I roam this wide world o'er
And note the paths that people choose,
My thoughts go back to that box by the door,
And the innocent cobbler's lot of shoes!

When I see fair words which innocent lips
Let fall in the lightness of guileless hearts—
Pure as the sweet the honey-bee sips
From the rose's depths ere its bloom departs—
When these words are torn by the vulture beaks
Which Purity's beauty loves to bruise,
I'm certain their arrogant venom seeks
A "size" for itself in the box of shoes.

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When some thoughtless jest from a lip of mirth
Cast lightly forth—a breath on the air—
Is seized by the shoe-fitters here on earth,
And rendered foul where 'twas meant most fair—
When a careless glance from a gay pair of eyes
Is caught up as something on which to muse,
'Tis plain the defamer is seeking a "size"
For himself in the box of ready-made shoes.

If a tale by some dreamy romancer be writ,
Each character chosen out of the brain,
And the shoe-fitters pull it to pieces to fit
Their personal attributes into its vein,
I turn me away then thoughtful and lone,
On the ludicrous folly of such to muse,
And feel there's a "fit," or they'd not put it on,
In the innocent cobbler's old box of shoes.

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WILLIE'S WIFE.

I.

WILLIE'S wife has come amang us—
Willie's wife is young:
Sure her heart can never wrang us
Wi' sae sweet a tongue.

II.

Willie's wife has een that sparkle
Like a starry night:
Surely anger canna darkle
Een that shine sae bright!

III.

Willie's wife has lips as smilin'
As the sun at morn;
Ah! the heart maun be beguilin'
Where such smiles are born.

IV.

Een sae bright an' lips sae pleasant
Are as sweet as spring;
Be her future like her present—
Sic a bonny thing!

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V.

Mony folk that ken her tell us
Luvely is her life:
Certain sumthin' gude befell us
When Will chose a wife!

VI.

Surely cauldness s'all na stay us—
Gudely maun she be;
Ways that won our Willie frae us
Maun be fair to see.

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THE MURDERER.

OUT, out into the night he speeds away,
His guilty heart beating the reveillé
Which breaks for ever in his stricken breast
The slumbers of remorse. The stars, to which
He has been wont to lift a loving gaze,
He fain would hide from now, and the soft winds,
Whose gentle fingers once caressed his brow,
He shrinks from as from whispering demons who
His damning secret now would fain betray
To all the world. The murmur of a brook,
A rustling leaf, the twitter of a bird,
Cause him to start and tremble, and the dews
Of mortal dread to wet his fevered brow

Nature, through guilt of his, seems guilty grown;
Her holiest smile seems, in his sin-veiled sight,
The hollow mask which hides Suspicion's face.
In every shadow he a pursuer sees,
In each sunbeam a dagger for his heart;
The passing breeze seems laden with his name,
Each bird-song freighted with a passing knell;
The rose seems tinted with his crime's red hue,
His victim's pallor each pale lily wears.

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He hates the light which may betray himself,
The darkness dreads which may conceal his foes.
Upon the ramparts of his life pale Fear,
A sleepless sentry, walks, while grim Distrust
Doubts even Fear, and so keeps double watch.

Hunted like some wild beast from place to place,
For ever hiding and yet never hid,
Nameless, without a home, without an hour
Unhaunted by the spectre of his sin;
Fearing to sleep and dreading to awake,
Afraid of God, yet more afraid of man;
Hungered and thirsting amid Plenty's feast,
Stealing with bated breath through thorny ways
When pleasant paths invite his bleeding feet;
Shunned by the good and hated by the bad—
His days creep on like some long funeral train,
A fearful corpse for ever in their midst.

Off from his manly shoulders he has dropt
His manhood, like a cloak which did conceal
His hideous deformity of soul.
No more may he stand forth among mankind
A man. The world has branded him accursed!
He knows no solitude; for him, alas!
The gloomiest loneliness is peopled most;
In the dread midnight, when all others sleep,
Silence shrieks murder in his startled ear!
And when the Sabbath pours its holy balm
Upon the bowed head of a Christian world,
He, on the rack, in Thought's hot dungeon bound,
Writhes in his agony, while Conscience stands

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As Grand Inquisitor, searing his soul
With the hot irons of remembered guilt.

He dreams sometimes of childhood's happy days—
A father's smile, a mother's loving kiss;
Then starts and feels that he has laid
A bloody hand on Memory's white shoulder!
Sometimes he kneels and clasps his crimsoned palms,
And feels his dumb heart wrestling with its crime,
Yet dares not breathe one prayer to that just God
Whom he has sinned against. His weary feet
Shall rest no more. He must take up his cross—
The cross of his great sin—and bear it on:
His guilt is with him always. Not a depth
So deep but it shall find him out; no height
So high, save Christ's forgiving arms,
But it shall track him there and smite him still.

No more his brow shall know Affection's kiss,
No more his red hand feel a friend's fond clasp.
His lips shall thirst in vain to drink of love
From hearts which trusted in him, and which broke
When he betrayed. His ears shall long to hear
Loved voices whose dear tones for him are hushed.
His heart shall ache with wounds which know no cure,
His anguished eyes weep for the blessèd sight
Of faces he shall look upon no more.
For him there is a place by no man's hearth,
A shelter for his head 'neath no man's roof;
No sinless woman on his breast shall lie,
Around his knee no happy children sport.
They who beneath the shadow of his life
Shall dare to rest, its upas blight must bear.

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He lives and yet is dead; for lo! his days
Which the Lord God did give him in the land
Are desolate. They lie like some fair field
Across whose harvest the consuming fire has swept,
And left destruction in its scathing track.
With none to love, too vile to be beloved,
A wretched wanderer upon the earth,
Like Ishmael of old his hand is raised
'Gainst every man, and each man's hand 'gainst him.

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WE TWA.

SIDE by side sit John and I,
Twa autumn leaves thegither,
And ilka blast that shakes the ane
Is cruel to the ither.
The wind about our door is cauld,
Life's fires are burned to embers;
The only sun that shines for us
Is burly, bleak November's.

The years now left us crutches are,
On which we totter slowly
Toward that rest that's ready for
The lofty and the lowly.
But as we hobble side by side,
An' gang our gait sae cheerly,
We baith find time to whisper yet,
"We lo'e ane 'ither dearly."

An' mony a canty hour we pass,
Our early days recallin',
When all Life's roses buddin' were,
Whose petals now are fallin'.

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In memory's shade we sit us doun,
Youth in our hearts sits singin',
An' John ance mair a bridegroom is—
My wedding bells are ringin'.

An' thus upon our brows the bleeze
Of ither years to woo us,
We hold ane 'ither's hand and think
How gude God has been to us;
How He has kept our hearts sae true,
And held the sunshine o'er us,
An' taught us when he sent a cloud
He knew what best was for us.

We mind how little faces gleamed,
An' little hands caressed us,
Lang syne, when in our sturdy youth
Our gracious Father blessed us.
We mind us how we buried them
Wi' grief an' tears at even;
We hid the root on earth—the bloom
The angels culled in heaven.

We thought our hearts lo'ed weel before
To ane anither plighted,
But they were never twins we found
Till grief had them united.
Joy's fading archway may be bright
For light hearts to pass under,
But mutual sorrows weave the ties
Which this warl' canna' sunder.

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So, jogging onward step by step,
  Though Life's young fires are embers,
We find there's warmth sufficient left
  To thaw our iced Novembers.
For lo'e can warm an' lo'e can cheer
  And lo'e can ope the portal,
Now locked by Life's auld rusty key,
  Which leads to bliss immortal.

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WOMAN'S WORK.

DARNING little stockings
For restless little feet,
Washing little faces
To keep them clean and sweet,
Hearing Bible lessons,
Teaching catechism,
Praying for salvation
From heresy and schism—
Woman's work!

Sewing on the buttons,
Overseeing rations,
Soothing with a kind word
Others' lamentations.
Guiding clumsy Bridgets
And coaxing sullen cooks,
Entertaining company
And reading recent books—
Woman's work!

Burying out of sight
Her own unhealing smarts,
Letting in the sunshine
On other clouded hearts;

Digitized by Google

Binding up the wounded
And healing of the sick,
Bravely marching onward
Through dangers dark and thick—
Woman's work!

Leading little children
And blessing manhood's years,
Showing to the sinful
How God's forgiveness cheers;
Scattering sweet roses
Along another's path,
Smiling by the wayside,
Content with what she hath—
Woman's work!

Letting fall her own tears
Where only God can see,
Wiping off another's
With tender sympathy;
Learning by experience,
Teaching by example,
Yearning for the gateway,
Golden, pearly, ample—
Woman's work!

Lastly cometh silence,
A day of deep repose—
Her locks smoothly braided
Upon her breast a rose;
Lashes resting gently
Upon the marble cheek,
A look of blessed peace
Upon the forehead meek!

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Pale hands softly folded,
The kindly pulses still;
The lips know no smiling,
The noble heart no thrill:
Her couch needs no smoothing,
She craveth for no care;
Love's tenderest entreaty
Wakes no responses there.

Fresh grave in the valley—
Tears, bitter sobs, regret;
One more solemn lesson
That life may not forget.
Face for ever hidden,
Race for ever run—
"Dust to dust," a voice saith,
And woman's work is done.

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THE MARCH SNOW-STORM.

'TWAS but yesterday morn,
When, with banner all torn,
The old warrior, Winter, received his congé;
And sounding the rally
O'er hill-top and valley,
He gathered his forces from slow water-courses,
From meadow and mountain and frozen-up fountain;
Then shut in his breath
'Twixt his icy old teeth,
And grumblingly sauntered away,
He did;
Grumbled and sauntered away.

Then down the dale dancing,
And up the glen glancing,
Came light-footed Spring and kissed the bleak wold—
Glanced up in surprise
At the cloud-covered skies,
Waved her sweet-scented hand o'er the frost-laden land;
Then merrily rallied the crocuses pallid,
That sullen and rigid
Lay frozen and frigid;
And she shivered to find it so cold
In her realm—
Shivered and burst into tears!

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Then back on his path,
With demon-like wrath,
Whirled wary old Winter, and scattered her train.
With ice-pointed lances
He froze up her glances;
Then mounting his forces on icicle horses,
On his icy-cold brow placed his pale crown of snow,
And defied vanquished Spring
To o'erthrow the ice-king—
Defied her, and frigidly mounted again
His throne—
His icy and frosty old throne.

And Spring, timid creature,
With fear in each feature,
Her sceptre resigned to the sturdy old king;
Then fled in dismay
From valleys away,
Sending wails of despair on the frost-bitten air;
While, with snow on the hills and ice in the rills,
His army in mail
Guarding every dale,
Winter looks over his shoulder at Spring,
And laughs—
Laughs at the victory won.

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DESERTED.

I.

SHE was a young wife once,
Full of trust,
Believing love's virgin gold
Could not rust.

II.

She knelt her at Christ's feet,
Young and strong,
And made her vows, and dreamed
Not of wrong.

III.

Her footsteps fell on flowers,
And her eyes
Saw only rosy paths,
Sunny skies.

IV.

Ah! how one kind voice blessed
The sweet air!
How fondly one kind hand
Stroked her hair!

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V.

Does any dare to say
  Clouds will rise?
Her trusting, wifely smile
  Doubt defies.

VI.

Can clouds bedim such faith,
  Such fond trust?
Never, till death shall lay
  Dust to dust.

VII.

Years pass—she is not yet
  An old wife,
But time has stolen the sweets
  From her life.

VIII.

No roses for her now;
  Only snow
Lies cold wherever flowers
  Used to grow—

IX.

Pale snow that drifts and drifts,
  Day by day,
Through hollows of her heart,
  Nor melts away.

X.

Her trustful, sweet young life
  Thus has died;
Nailed to Love's cruel cross,
  Crucified.

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TO GUY.

AS rivers which their sources find
In mountain summits parted wide,
Yet meet at last and find the sea
In one commingled common tide—

So we, of different birth and blood,
Strangers for years our course did run,
Till Fate the parted pulses found,
And swept the swift tides into one!

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DO ANGELS WEEP?

UP from the earth can worldly woes arise,
Piercing the starry canopy above,
To wound the spotless souls of Paradise,
And wring stern sorrow from those hearts of love?
Oh tell me, spirit watchers of my sleep!
In yon fair heaven do the angels weep?

Say, can those pearl-winged messengers of peace
Bend their bright brows o'er sorrow's shaded hearth;
Bring to the bruisèd heart its blest release,
And mingle heavenly tears with tears of earth?
Tell me, O ye who saintly vigils keep
With mortal mourners! do the angels weep?

Comes there swift rushing from its spirit-home
Some beaming seraph for each child of sin,
Wooing the restless, troubled heart to come
And fold itself her cleansing wing within?
Say, ye who heaven's golden harvest reap!
O'er earthly errors do the angels weep?

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How vast a truth, for mortals here to know
That they who sound the heavenly harps can mourn!
That for each sin the human heart doth sow
A tear-drop in some seraph's breast is born!
Oh what temptation o'er the soul could sweep,
Nerving the heart to make an angel weep?

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INGEMISCO.

I.

THE dying day
Wrapped in its sunset banners lay
Fading, fading:
There, wordless both, we watched it going,
With coldness on our two hearts snowing,
And silence out of silence growing,
Shading, shading
All our lives with its chill flowing.
Parted for ever,
We stood together
Among the hills of purple heather.

II.

There, side by side,
We saw the sweet day when it died
Sadly, sadly.
We heard the songs of twilight birds,
The tinkling bells of twilight herds,
All things save one another's words,
Gladly, gladly—
Softening our aching heart's discords.

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Parted for ever,
We walked together
Among the purple blooming heather.

III.

We heard the hum
Of evening's hidden minstrels come
Creeping, creeping
From hill-top, tree-top, shore and stream,
As if e'en silence found a theme
In evening's loveliness supreme!
Weeping, weeping:
Our souls awaked from life's best dream!
Parted for ever,
We passed together
Across the blooming waves of heather.

IV.

Our hearts were numb,
Our passionate lips were stricken dumb—
Throbbing, throbbing;
Our burning pulses shook their tears
Across the unforgotten years
Of tender hopes and slumbering fears.
Robbing, robbing
Life of all that life endears—
Parted for ever,
We crossed together
The scented shadows of the heather.

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v.

One swift look cast—
One mute appeal—the last, the last!
Parted, parted,
Two hands which ne'er shall clasp again,
Two hearts that breaking hide their pain—
Pride stabbed our love and it was slain!
Frozen-hearted,
Two God-bound lives world-rent in twain!
Parted for ever,
No more together
We cross the fragrant seas of heather!

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THE OLD WILLOW TREE.

IT waves in its loftiness close by the door
Where my little lips lisped their accents of yore,
Where my young brother played—and a mother's hand bound
The wreath on the forehead that loved to be crowned;
It stands in its pride by the moss-verdured well
Where the rainbow-hued water-drops musically fell,
While the accents of childhood's dispassionate glee
Rang up through the leaves of the old willow tree.

It spreads its broad branches far, far o'er the spot
Which saw us assembled, each eve, in our cot,
Where the eyes of affection devotedly met,
And kind words were spoken I ne'er can forget.
'Neath its sheltering arms, in the soft summer air,
Rose softly and sweetly our voices in prayer,
And hushed as a breeze o'er a calm summer sea
Rose our words through the leaves of the old willow tree.

It saw my sweet sister go forth in her pride;
Her beautiful cheek bore the blush of a bride;

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Her eyes flashed with pleasure, her rosy lips smiled
As a mother's fond blessing there hallowed her child;
It saw that lip sadden, that eye drop a tear,
As the parting from home and its loved ones drew near;
But the birds and the branches with voices of glee
Filled with music the leaves of the old willow tree.

It saw my brave brother become a proud man,
Of loftiest purpose and resolute plan;
It saw him launch forth on the waves of the world,
Like a stem from the parent tree ruthlessly hurled;
It saw him borne back, all his high hopes at rest,
With the pulseless young heart that lay cold in his breast;
O God! his last parting was spoken to me
'Neath the listening leaves of the old willow tree.

I next left the spot with my brow overcast,
And the joys of my childhood for ever gone past;
I had learned there to know that this world cannot give
Those pleasures for which we all labor and live:
With quivering lips thence I wandered away—
Lips too mournful to smile, too despairing to pray;
But I bore in my bosom far o'er the blue sea
Some dew-laden leaves from the old willow tree.

Long years have gone by since I last bade adieu
'Neath its shade to the fond friends my young spirit knew—

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Years sweeping their changes across the hearthstone,
Where my father and mother now linger alone.
How warm was their blessing, how thick were their tears,
As I clung to them fondly the last time for years!
Oh I feel in my soul they are waiting for me
'Neath the whispering leaves of the old willow tree!

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ZURA.

ZURA, from her casement leaning,
  Hears the song of mocking-bird,
Sees the laurel and laburnum
  By the sweet south breezes stirred—
Sees the rose and pallid lily
  Drop their faces from her view,
Half abashed and half emboldened,
  Dainty tipplers drunk with dew.

Zura shakes her dusky tresses
  Backward from her forehead white,
And with parted lips she drinketh
  Of the glory of the night—
Revels in its waste of verdure,
  In its prodigal perfume;
While the royal-hearted Southland
  Holds its carnival of bloom.

Zura sees the moon of midnight
  O'er her airy ocean ride,
As some ship that drags her anchor
  And goes drifting with the tide—

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Here and there a silent meteor
On its secret mission flies,
Flaunting its mysterious pennon—
Blockade-runner of the skies.

Zura hears a footstep falling
On the blossom-scented sod,
And her heart throws kisses softly,
Shyly where that foot hath trod.
Hark! the tender notes of minstrel
With the blossoms interlace,
And her Creole blood goes bounding
In swift blushes to her face.

"To the starry high seas, maiden,
Lift the glory of thine eyes;
There they'll find in all that's brightest
Than themselves no brighter prize;
See the red rose where its petals
Night's narcotic goblet sips;
Were its crimson hues and sweetness
Borrowed from thy sweeter lips?

"See the fair Wisteria casting
Purple pennons to the breeze—
Round about thy casement climbing—
Tell me, maiden, what it sees.
Does it kiss thy young cheek, Zura?
Does it look thee in the eye?
Does it see thy bosom heaving?
Ah! most enviable spy!

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"Birds of spring, in grove of orange
Nests have built amid the bloom;
Caskets holding treasure hidden
In a palace of perfume.
Scented orchards drip their sweetness
On the violet's royal bed
Of veinèd gold and prïncely purple—
Stars eternal overhead.

"In the maze of bloom the zephyrs
Whisper they have lost their way—
Of her own exceeding sweetness,
Night herself must faint away.
Buds and bloom and dewy blossoms,
Light of moon and spreading grove,
Ray of star and wing of zephyr,
Whisper, dearest, but of love—

"Love such as I bear thee, Zura:
Answer me with smile or sigh,
Wilt give love for love, my darling?"
Softly came the answer, "Fie!"
Sang again the pleading minstrel:
"Maiden, trifle not with love;
'Tis the signet-ring of heaven
Dropped from angel hands above.

"Fly with me, O Zura! maiden,
Thine shall be earth's brightest bowers,
And the universe shall know no
Fairer resting-place than ours.

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In the ever-blooming Tropics
We will find our paradise—
Thine in my supreme devotion;
Mine, dear love, in thy sweet eyes.

"Round the feet of Time, the tyrant,
Rosy shackles shall be hung—
That we hear him not in passing,
And remain for ever young.
Birds uncaged in bowers of beauty
Shall to music set each day;
Wilt thou come, my own, my Zura?"
Coyly came the answer, "Nay."

"Falsehood, then," the minstrel mutters,
"Fills the earth and fills the skies,
Turns Hymettian sweets to poison,
Lurketh in a maiden's eyes;
Makes her honeyed lip taste bitter,
Sours the sweetness of her cheek,
Chokes within its treacherous fingers
Joys that would her bosom seek.

"Robs the rose of all its beauty,
In the orange blossom hides!"
Came a whisper drifting toward him:
"Orange blossoms are for brides!"
Swift a new hope, like an arrow,
Shot across the minstrel's brain—
And with trembling lip he gathered
Up his broken song again;

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And again the tuneful measure
Floated far and floated free,
Mingling its impassioned cadence
With love's sweet hyperbole:
"I will steep my song in dewdrops
Till it win thee to my side—
I will braid the midnight moonbeams,
Zura, sweet, to crown thee bride.

"I will wrap thy fair existence
In the mantle of my life—
Proudly guard its precious pulses
With the sacred watchword—wife;
With the heart-beats in my bosom
For thy feet I'll pave the way—
Wilt thou bless me, Zura, maiden?"
Gently came the answer, "Yea!"

Then a light form from the casement
In the moonlight bendeth low;
Orange blossoms, dew and roses!
What new secret do ye know?
Heart of maid and heart of minstrel
Joy triumphant sentinels—
Over all the stars are hanging—
Beautiful betrothal-bells.

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A REVERIE.

THE Past! How mournfully its tides return
And break on memory's melancholy shore;
Quenching the watchfires of the soul, which burn,
Kindled by cherished flowers whose bloom is o'er.
Each wave that dashes 'gainst the aching heart
Tells of some withered hope, some joy that's crushed,
Some silent song whose echoes ne'er depart,
Some voice we dearly loved for ever hushed!

How fraught with change, with sorrow and decay,
Come back the pictures of departed years!
How many graves obstruct Thought's loving way!
How hearts have changed—how smiles have turned to tears!
And all succeeding days which gently rest,
As tide-worn pebbles, on Time's fading shore,
Wear their impressions sadly in the breast,
Which yearns for pleasures that return no more.

Love, that we deemed enduring in its strength,
Falters when most we wish it to be strong,
And hearts we thought unchanging change at length,
And cease to love where they have loved so long.

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Thus are our spirits taught to turn from earth,
From wounded love and coldly-severed ties,
To seek that peace which wins its blessed birth
In the unsullied land beyond the skies!

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THE BANDIT'S BURIAL.

FROM THE GERMAN OF FREILIGRATH.

ON bloody bier extended
A corpse lay cold and wan;
The heavy burden, slowly,
Six stalwart men bore on—
Six men all bronzed and bearded,
Well armed with steel and lead,
Through odorous pine forests
Bore on their silent dead.

Two brightly-polished muskets,
With barrels round and clear,
Crossed by three stout rapiers,
Composed this forest bier.
Upon their blades the bandit,
Once fiercest in the fray,
With ghastly head thrown backward,
Now bruised and bleeding lay.

Upon his pulseless temples
A gaping wound lay red,
Where on its fatal mission
The deadly bullet sped:

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Across his frowning forehead
Fast flowed the stiffening gore,
While mountain breezes fanned the face
They could refresh no more.

His bloodshot eye was glassy
His cheek's brown hue had flown,
And to the livid lips in death
His scornful smile had grown.
The blade, once bold in combat,
The right hand tightly held
With grasp that would not loosen
When conquering foeman felled.

O'er stones and tangled mosses
From his last battle-field,
The brigand drew unheeded
The sword he'd scorned to yield;
And down its blade so shining
A bloody streamlet ran,
As though the very weapon
Wept for the murdered man.

His left hand, cold and stiffened,
His silken girdle held
In grasp that clutched it sternly
When death his pulses quelled.
Gold lace and tinsel loosely
Waved his slashed doublet o'er,
And in his belt the dagger
That would be drawn no more

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So lay the pallid warrior
  Beneath the gloomy pines,
While comrades bore him sadly
  Through the dark Apennines.
Calm on his bier of weapons
  He slept 'neath heaven's blue vault,
Till in the forest's deepest depths
  Their leader bade them halt.

In solemn mountain fastness
  Down the rude bier was laid,
And sabre bright and musket
  Now serve for pick and spade.
They shut him in no coffin,
  Lost, lonely, loveless, dead;
Shrouded in blood and armor,
  He seeks his dreamless bed.

The funeral rites are over,
  The grave swells black and bare;
The little troop turn silently
  And leave him sleeping there.
They load their trusty muskets—
  Hark to that whistle shrill!
In secret mountain coverts
  They have vanished—all is still!

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THE LION'S RIDE.

FROM THE GERMAN OF FREILIGRATH.

I.

THE desert king, the lion, comes to roam his kingdom o'er;
Above him wave the rustling leaves of lofty sycamore,
As, winding near the dark lagoon, he crouches in the cane,
And waits to see the tall giraffe come there to drink again.

II.

'Tis evening, when the Hottentot his lowly village lights,
When sunset signals gleam no more upon the mountain heights,
When the benighted Caffre dreary jungle hurries through,
When in the wood and by the stream sleep antelope and gnu—

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III.

Comes now with step majestic o'er the desert the giraffe,
And in the still lagoon kneels down its waters thick to quaff;
With eager eye and outstretched neck she seeks the muddy pool,
And lowly bends her burning mouth and parching tongue to cool.

IV.

The rushes part! with fearful roar the lion upward springs;
Close to that bowed and gentle neck with deadly grip he clings.
What a steed and what a rider! what superb caparison!
Did royal state or stable ever claim a rarer one?

V.

Up leaps the doomed giraffe with wild, reverberating cry,
And forth upon the silent plain speeds in her agony;
All down the splendid housings drops a deep ensanguined stain,
And the charger's breast is curtained by the rider's yellow mane!

VI.

She beats the moonlit pathway with her swiftly-flying feet,
Her glaring eyeballs vainly strained some kindly aid to meet;

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Thick o'er the brown-flecked saddle-cloth the heated
foam doth start,
And the hushed desert listens to the charger's beating
heart.

VII.

Like some weird ghost that panting steed glides o'er
the sandy sea;
Spread on the wind the rider's banner floateth royally;
Behind the flying phantom whirls a golden cloud of
sand,
Like the pillared cloud which guided Israel to the
Promised Land.

VIII.

Comes on their track the whirring vulture, croaking
through the air;
That foul profaner of the grave, the hyena, is there;
The robber of the herdsman's flocks, the panther, joins
the train,
And the royal rider leads them all across the bloody
plain.

IX.

Firmer upon his tottering throne the monarch plants his
feet,
And with his claws the cushion rends which forms his
princely seat:
Her restless rider onward still the poor giraffe must bear,
Though dimmer grow her glaring eyes, and faint her
gaspings are.

Digitized by Google

x.

On the desert's lonely verge at last the foaming steed doth reel—
She dies, and lo! the courser now becomes the rider's meal.
Far over Madagascar gleams the gray dawn of the east,
And once again is ended here the lion's nightly feast.

Digitized by Google

ELODIE.

I.

I KNEW somebody, long ago,
Ere life grew sad and time grew slow—
I will tell you whom, if you list to me,
And forgive if I weep for Elodie.
She was a rose without a thorn,
A blush on the blooming cheek of morn,
A dimple upon life's sunniest stream,
A bliss, a breath, a beautiful dream.
Under the autumn's nut-brown branches,
Under the leafy avalanches,
Blushing, brightening, laughing, swaying,
Ever going, yet ever staying,
There I met her, loved her, wooed her,
Idolizingly pursued her,
Laid my lavish love before her,
Hung the bridal chaplet o'er her!

II.

Life was a double joy to me,
Wrapped in love's holy mystery.

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In a new-made channel the current swept,
With a new-born power my pulses leapt;
Two eyes of blue were the heaven I sought;
Beyond those sapphire gates there was naught:
In life's sweet dawn love chained me there,
But the fetters were golden he made me wear.
Like shaken sunshine swung her tresses,
Hiding the arms that gave caresses;
A drift with sunset red upon it
Her brow was when my kiss fell on it.
She was a picture half enchanted,
A temple by some angel haunted;
I would not confess her all divine:
She was holily human—she was mine!

III.

Mine, did I say? I called her so
In loving lunacy long ago:
In earth below or heaven above
Was there aught so strong as my strong love?
My arm that shielded, my heart that shrined,
My soul round that fragile flowret twined;
Could they not shelter and save and shield,
Do all—do everything but yield?
I heard not Death's cold tapping finger,
Bidding my love no longer linger;
For me, in my mad idolatry,
Life had no limit, heaven no decree.
I never remembered my rose might fade,
I dreamed such blossoms never decayed;
Till her sweet lips smiled, and said, "We sever,"
Till her fond blue eyes were closed for ever!

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IV.

Under the swinging, swaying willow
They made her icy, icy pillow!
I, like a tombstone, bending o'er,
Wretched that I went not before,
Record her death, her name, her age
Upon my heart's embittered page,
And see the tear-wet sod grow green
My life's one love and me between!
Yet God, who took my idol hence,
Gave, in his grand omnipotence,
Belief to fill the empty niche—
Thus he impoverished to enrich.
Calmly I wait Death's certain hand
To ope the gates of the holy land,
Where, purified, my soul shall see
In heaven my angel, Elodie.

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SONG.

COME, haste thee home; the lamp is trimmed,
An anxious heart is throbbing there,
And loving eyes, with tear-drops dimmed,
Are gazing on thy empty chair.

Oh haste thee home; a tender smile
Shall chase the care-look from thy brow,
While love and joy the time beguile
Which passes there so slowly now.

The fire burns brightly on the hearth,
The cricket chirps its monotone,
And one who loves thee best of earth
Awaits thee there, and waits alone.

While red the flickering fire-flames glow,
The watcher notes her shadow fall,
And waits the absent one to throw
One more beside it on the wall!

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She watches by the cottage door,
  She lingers by the garden gate,
And speaks thy dear name o'er and o'er,
  Like some lone bird that calls its mate.

Then haste thee home; the lamp is trimmed,
  A loving heart is throbbing there,
And gentle eyes, with tear-drops dimmed,
  Are gazing on thy empty chair.

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BY THE FIRE.

MEMORY sits in my heart to-night,
  Like a lone saint telling her holy beads
In the dim cloisters of long ago;
  She opens the book of the past and reads.

She turns the leaves of my lonely life,
  And my years in a slow and solemn procession
Go steadily by, like a train of monks
  That pass on their evening way to confession.

There are young years whose summery skies
  Lift their arches blue o'er a life serene:
No sorrowful willow woven among
  The beautiful bay trees' hopeful green.

And years of darkening change march there,
  Which bear no trace of life's early sweet,
And cowlèd years which join in the train
  With lowered brows and unwilling feet.

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And all these years have their friends and foes
As pensive Memory's guests to-night:
She raises her calm blue eyes and smiles
As with noiseless step they come in sight.

And thou art there, O tenderest dream
That ever my lifetime came to share!
Sweet as the smile on an infant's lip—
Exalting, earnest and pure as prayer.

We seem once more to sit side by side
Down by the warm hearth's mellow light,
And the old love-links we deemed so strong
Seem just as strong as ever to-night!

What does the cold world know of the storm
Which drove us helpless far out to sea,
Where the turbulent billows rose like hills
For ever and aye 'twixt you and me?

It may read of wrecks and storm-swept decks,
And of white sails sadly driven asunder,
But little it knows of the joys or woes
Which the merciless billows have swept under.

Through every change and every care
My heart to that early dream has clung.
But I know that the sweetest psalmody
Of all my changeful life has been sung.

I shall hear life's matin-peals no more
Across the flowery meadows rolling;
Just over the lonesome twilight hills
I hear the vesper-bells all tolling.

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And I stand to-night by the gloomy rocks
  Of a solemn and ever-echoing shore,
Calling in vain for the glance and smile
  Which have vanished, alas! for evermore.

But I hear thy voice on the other side,
  And I know the hour mine soon will be
When Death shall divide the Red Sea of Time,
  And my ransomed spirit cross over to thee.

Digitized by Google

INSCRIPTION FOR A TOMB.

HERE have we gathered, with a reverent hand,
The sacred shackles that a while detained
An angel from the paths of Paradise.
Death saw and struck the mortal fetters off,
And gave rejoicing heaven back its own.

Digitized by Google

MARY MOORE.

I KNEW thee when thy girlish years were few,
Mary Moore;
When the bloomy blush upon thy cheek was new,
Mary Moore;
When the blossoms in thy hair
Than thy brow were not more fair—
Sweeter not what thrushes sung
Than the language of thy tongue,
Mary Moore.

Thy scarlet lip was winning in its smile,
Mary Moore;
The dimple on thy young cheek was a wile,
Mary Moore;
And thy song was like the note
In the linnet's joyous throat,
When it greets the morning's rays
With its psalmody of praise,
Mary Moore.

Side by side, through the orchard's drifting bloom,
Mary Moore;
Hand in hand, drenched in dewy spring's perfume,
Mary Moore;

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Heart with heart by shelly beach,
Trusting silence for our speech—
Dreaming youth and gentle maid,
In those sunny days we strayed,
Mary Moore.

While the bob-o'-link shook his merry bells,
Mary Moore;
In the meadows and the cool mossy dells,
Mary Moore;
Ere the summer-time had flown,
Change thy gentle heart had known,
And thou bad'st me, "Go, forget!"
What we both remember yet,
Mary Moore!

Where the bloom hung the fruit is on the bough,
Mary Moore;
The tender blade has harvests rip'ning now,
Mary Moore;
But the thrushes sing no more
Where they sweetly sang of yore,
And my heart has learned to live
Without the love thou couldst not give,
Mary Moore!

Digitized by Google

MIRABELLE.

I.

SHE lay on a crimson sofa,
And the sheen of her golden hair
Hung down in unbraided beauty
Over shoulders as snow-flakes fair.
A cloud on the pensive forehead
And a lift of the arching brow—
The tremor of some emotion
Flitting over the red lips now.

II.

Two letters beside her lying—
One bearing a nobleman's crest;
The other without emblazon,
Save a tremulous heart's request.
The first a coronet offered
And "position whilst thou dost live;"
The next, "a true heart's devotion
Is, darling, all I can give."

III.

"Wealth! 'tis a marvelous sceptre
In womanly keeping," she mused,
And thought of a coronet gleaming
On her glorious locks unloosed.

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"Gold! 'tis a talisman mighty,
And a setting for beauty rare;"
Then smiled in the polished mirror
At herself, exccedingly fair.

IV.

"The nobleman writes me kindly,
With the pride of his lofty race,
And in courtly language praises
My 'radiant beauty and grace.'
The rare temptation of riches
He has skillfully round me thrown,
But I remember while reading
That his years are double my own;

V.

"And I note my noble suitor,
In essaying my heart to move,
Uses but the force of money,
And never the lever of love.
But Guy here writes to me only
Of a love that has grown with life;
And, urging his strong affection,
Sayeth, 'Mirabelle, be my wife.'

VI.

"Gold! it hath wonderful power
To soften the bitterest lot;
But could it extract the poison
From a marriage where love is not?

Digitized by Google

Pride whispers, 'To be a fine lady
Is well in Ambition's eyes'—
'To be a true woman is nobler,'
My womanly heart replies."

VII.

Again she lifted the letters,
There comparing them each with each—
The pompous parade of riches
With a poor man's tender speech.
"For one I should shine," she whispered,
"A queen in the wary world's eyes—
But a beggared heart I'd carry
Hidden under the grand disguise!

VIII.

"And I must wear, for the other,
Cold poverty's scantiest gown,
But my heart, in his fond keeping,
Would wear Love's rosiest crown.
Ah me!" said the lady sighing,
"Would that heart ever feel regret
That for true love's flowery chaplet
I rejected a coronet?

IX.

"When my cheek bears no more roses,
And my forehead knows youth's decline,
Shall I mourn these proffered treasures
And this title which might be mine?

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Could I sit down in Guy's cottage,
With a tear on my faded face
That in the Duke's passing carriage
I owned no luxurious place?

X.

"Nay! my heart makes ready answer
To the question, bitter and cold;
Wealth is Life's fanciful gilding,
But true love is its solid gold.
The honor of honest labor,
The escutcheon of industry,
And the crown of spotless virtue,
Mark the real nobility.

XI.

"Thank God that it is not money
And titles and title-deeds
That can satisfy the craving
Of a woman's noblest needs!
Here is my Lord Duke's answer,
And let him not deem it rash"—
Then she watched the waxen taper
Burn the nobleman's words to ash.

XII.

Then she wrote with a glad impatience:
"Dear Guy, I am not one to mock
A true heart's sincere petition
With the idleness of mere talk.
With faith in your noble nature,
Sweet trust in your love—it is well:
Through life, until death, I answer,
I am thine alone—MIRABELLE."

Digitized by Google

LITTLE MAY BALLARD.

FOLD the white hands softly o'er the pure bosom,
Clasp in her fingers earth's loveliest flowers:
Angels in Paradise wait to unloose them
And scatter their fragrance through heavenly bowers.
Upward and downward, through regions of space,
Heralds of light hover over the clay,
Touching the forehead and kissing the face,
Calling, "Child-angel, come with us away."

Seal the sweet eyes and fold back the fair tresses,
Spirits, like hers, linger not here below;
Angels but lent her from angel-caresses
To teach us the loveliness Heaven doth know.
See ye not radiant faces of love?
Hear ye no rustle of seraphic wings?
Feel ye no scintillant glory to prove
Mystical presence of heavenly things?

Hush thy wild sobs, O disconsolate mourner!
Thy little one slumbers—sweet, sweet is her rest;
Angels of tenderness far hence have borne her—
The arms of "Our Father" thy babe have caressed.

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Upward, still upward—on, on to the skies,
Winging their flight from the prison of clay,
Past the gates of the dawn and the realms of sunrise
The child and the angels have flitted away.

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LIZZIE.

DO I remember Lizzie? Oh yes!
She was the pride of the place;
No one looked in her eyes but to bless
Her bright and beautiful face.

I never saw a forehead so white,
Such a purely womanly brow:
Let's see! if I remember aright,
That was thirty years ago.

Her hair was as dark as forest gloom
When the sun's about to set,
With here and there through the dusky bloom
A sunbeam shimmering yet.

And her cheeks were like crushed carnations,
With lilies laid close beside,
Or a wave's paly palpitations
With sunrise upon the tide.

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"Would I know her now?" Art thou hinting?
To affection what is Time
But an artist softly retinting
Pictures already sublime?

Know Lizzie? Yes! anywhere straying,
Walking in triumph or tears;
My heart has been kneeling and praying
To her image all these years—

Bound there by memories unblighted,
And love that could never die,
Though her fate was never united,
Thank Heaven! with such as I.

I never beside her long tarried,
And never once kissed her brow;
No doubt she long ago married,
And wholly forgets me now;

For mine was that worship unspoken
Which burneth on unrevealed.
I knew, though my heart should be broken,
'Twere better for both concealed.

I know that my forehead is wrinkled,
My bosom becrossed with care,
And time has unsparingly sprinkled
His hoarfrost over my hair.

But, then, what of that? Not a wrinkle
Furrows my heart to-day,
For Lizzie's white hand seems to sprinkle
Youth on its roots alway.

Digitized by Google

The sunset of life is serener
  Than the glowing flush of its dawn;
And Memory goes out like a gleaner
  In the fields of the golden gone.

And she lies like a dreamy sleeper
  'Mongst the harvests swept away
By Time, that relentless reaper,
  To the world of Yesterday

In her bygone girlish glory
  My Lizzie she loves to hold:
There she lives like the song or story
  Which, though aged, never grows old.

Like a star she rose on my lifetime;
  I worship that starlight yet,
Though the rays of her womanly wife-time
  Some other bosom has met.

What! say you she never has wedded?
  Strange is that story, if true;
Why the days of her life seemed threaded
  With love-links for ever new.

Lovers, like sentinels, wandered
  Along her beautiful life;
Was all that fidelity squandered,
  And Lizzie never a wife?

You say that her hair is whitened,
  And her life one long regret;
That her days go by unbrightened,
  And her heart cannot forget.

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Pray, what in her sweet existence
Could give her a moment's pain?
What heart ever showed resistance
To aught she desired to gain?

Nay! say not yon form is Lizzie;
Ah! trifle not thus again;
My brain grows easily dizzy,
And my heart is prone to pain.

Still, do you say she is near me?
Her face! Ah! how can you dare!
Do you mean yon pale woman—hear me—
With her crown of silver hair?

With that brow so sad and shrunken,
That eye with its faded fires,
That cheek so pallid and sunken,
That lip where all joy expires?

You rave! I turn from your picture;
Your Lizzie like that may seem,
But mine is unbound by the stricture
Of any such fearful dream.

Mine lives in the land immortal
Of manhood's undying truth,
And love is the pearly portal
Of the fount of eternal youth!

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LOVE LINES.

OH tell me not that future years
Will bring a shadow to my brow,
That time will turn my smiles to tears,
And change the heart that loves thee now.
As fly the years more closely still
Clings to the oak the pendent vine;
As time rolls by, so, dear one, will
My heart cling closer unto thine.

Talk not of wealth's alluring power;
What are its gems and gold to me?
I'd give them all for one sweet hour
Of calm, unbroken bliss with thee.
Ah! dearest one, the humble hearth
Where love and truth contented live
Lendeth a brightness to the earth
Which wealth can never, never give.

Then take me to thy faithful breast,
And let thy heart my haven be;
Where I may safely sink to rest,
From life's rude tempests fondly free.

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Thus, heart to heart and hand in hand,
We'll smiling greet life's shadowed even,
Whose fading light reveals the land
Where Love creates eternal heaven.

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TO SOME FALSE HAIR.

HERE is a tress of hair like mine,
So like in texture and in hue
'Twould seem, as here its threads I twine,
Beneath no other sun or vine,
Upon no other head than mine,
It grew.

Yet know I not upon what brow
The glossy locks first shining hung;
Whether 'twas pure as drifted snow,
Whether 'twas sad or dark or low,
Whether 'twas old and worn with woe,
Or young.

What thoughts filled up the busy brain
Beneath this soft, uncurling hair,
Were they of greed and golden gain,
Ambition, avarice or pain?
Teemed they with burning hopes or vain
Despair?

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How throbbed the heart? Did love alone
Hold undisturbed dominion there?
Or was that heart his tottering throne,
With pride and peace and glory flown,
Its royal colors thickly strewn
With care?

Is it some woman's radiant hair,
The former pride of some proud head?
Has age shot silver arrows where
The sister tresses shimmering are?
Has Beauty scorned the change to share
And fled?

Or has the former owner died?
What pangs or pleasures felt she last?
The pressure of some true heart tried,
Some haunting thoughts of fate defied,
Or turned she to some love denied
Long past?

O relic of some life gone by,
Or of some bosom beating yet!
Were voice but thine how might I sigh
O'er some heart's hallowed history—
Some long life's mournful mystery—
Regret!

Cold world of fashion, false and vain,
How much in thy deceit we trust!
Forgetful that thy glittering train,
Like this fair tress must, grain by grain,
Be scattered and resolved again
To dust.

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THE LITTLE FIDDLER'S SONG.

I FIDDLE for breakfast, I fiddle for dinner,
I fiddle for saint and I fiddle for sinner;
From morning till night my little bare feet
Go cheerily roaming from street to street;
I pocket the pennies and pocket the dimes,
And I crook my elbow to suit the times,
With my squeak! squeak! do! re! mi! fa!

I fiddle for maid and I fiddle for master,
Where faces are fairest I fiddle the faster;
Where money is spent or where money is made,
I'm often rebuffed, but oftener paid;
I play for the poor and I play for the proud,
And I pass my cap to the kind-hearted crowd,
With my squeak! squeak! do! re! mi! fa!

Few know the joy that a vagabond feels,
With a fiddle to play and a dog at his heels;
A-roaming from palace to cottager's door,
Amusing the rich and delighting the poor,
Content to sleep anywhere when it comes night,
A peaceful conscience making "all right,"
With my squeak! squeak! do! re! mi! fa!

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The world owes a living to Rover and me;
We cheerfully take it, whatever it be,
Eating our dinner in quiet, alone—
I taking the meat, he taking the bone;
Then, taking the road when 'tis time that we jog,
Together we tramp it—myself and my dog,
With our squeak! squeak! do! re! mi! fa!

I travel by land and I travel by sea,
So careless and happy and healthy and free:
With a crust in my pocket and peace in my heart,
I'm ready to rest or I'm ready to start;
Gayly I wander 'twixt palace and hut,
Merrily scraping the jolly cat-gut,
With its squeak! squeak! do! re! mi! fa!

Where wild blows the wind and where frost fills the air,
Where rivers are icy and mountains are bare;
In climes where the orange and jasmine in bloom
Load the wandering breeze with the sweetest perfume—
Right tired, sometimes, but disconsolate never,
I trustingly swear by my fiddle for ever,
With its squeak! squeak! do! re! mi! fa!

I haven't a sorrow, I haven't a care,
Though naked my feet and though rugged my fare;
And as for my clothes being ragged or small,
Why Adam and Eve had just no clothes at all;
So, sure that I'm much better off than were they,
I fiddle and fiddle and fiddle away,
With my squeak! squeak! do! re! mi! fa!

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I fiddle to-day and I fiddle to-morrow,
I fiddle for joy and I fiddle for sorrow;
In the North, in the South, in the East, in the West,
Wherever my fiddle will pay me the best;
A musical elbow I find is the thing
To Poverty rob of her bitterest sting,
With its squeak! squeak! do! re! mi! fa!

I fiddle for breakfast, I fiddle for dinner,
I fiddle for saint and I fiddle for sinner;
From morning till night, with my little bare feet,
I cheerily wander from street to street;
I pocket the pennies and pocket the dimes,
Shaking my elbow to suit the times,
With my squeak! squeak! do! re! mi! fa!

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TO A FLOWER FROM GERTRUDE'S TOMB.

A ROSE, a pure, white rose, so sweet, so fair,
One well might deem thy spirit hidden there,
Its flight to heaven staying yet a while
Some loving mourner's sorrow to beguile.
I kiss the flower—its petals, half unfurled,
So like thy heart—"unspotted from the world,"
Its gentle fragrance, delicate and pure—
So like thy guileless spirit's portraiture.
'Twas gathered from thy grave—this little rose—
Where its main stem such lavish verdure throws;
The cold, forbidding features of the tomb
Lie hidden in its sweet embrace of bloom,
As if the vine had caught the tender grace
Thy smile once had, to cheer a gloomy place.

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AFTER THE WAR.

OVER the stony street, clamp, clamp, clamp!
Ride the cavalrymen from the camp;
With carbines slung and sabres bright,
Home they ride from foray and fight,
Grimed with their battles lost and won,
Husband, lover, father and son
Riding home.

Tramp, tramp through the dusty street
Rings the sound of returning feet;
Through the valleys and over the hills,
The throb, throb of their marching thrills.
With folded banners and sullen drums,
Rank and file the regiment comes
Marching home.

Heavily fall the hoofs of the horses,
Clattering home with the cavalrymen;
Steadily tramp the feet of the forces,
Marching home from the wars again,
Muskets silent and sabres sheathed,
Peace on the gleaming steel has breathed,
God be praised!

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Alas! for desolate hearts and homes
Where the long-awaited never comes!
Where the hearth is swept and fire kept bright
For eyes that never will see its light—
Where affection waits, and waits in vain,
For the step that never will come again
From the war!

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LINES

ON THE DEATH OF JAMES E. VAN STEENBURG, OF FISHKILL VILLAGE, DUCHESS Co., N. Y.

AND thou art gone! Gone as the brave oak goes
When, lightning-riven, it falls in all its strength;
Gone like a star struck from its shining sphere,
With all its brilliant radiance undimmed;
Gone, like a sun that's set, with all the gold
And purple of a noble life well spent,
Making thy couch of death irradiate.
Thine absence doth a starless twilight leave
In hearts that loved thee, yet is it illumed
By the rich glow the memory of thy days—
So rightly lived, so calmly yielded up—
Paints in warm, glowing, glorious tints
Along the dark horizon of regret.

The dew was yet upon thy leaves of life;
Time, in his fiery thirst, had not yet sapped
The morning freshness from thy manly pulse,
The summer sunshine from thy generous heart
Thy feet yet rested 'mid the rosy bloom,
The noonday light and warmth and crystal truth

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Of grand existence, and the curdling clouds
Of wintry age had not, as yet, obscured
One star in the fair zenith of thy days.
The royal gold of faithful friendship filled
The coffers of thy life, yet thou didst die!—

Die, while Love clung to thee and prayed aloud
In direst agony that thou wouldst live.
Die, while True Friendship, self-forgetful, stood
And watched with smited heart thy failing pulse.
Die, while Affection's meek resistance fought
The one foe stronger than are all our friends!
Ay! while we wept Death offered thee his hand,
And thou didst take it fearlessly, like one
Who only sees in him the trusty guide
Who waits to lead us through Life's final gates
Into the better country just beyond.

Droop, O ye village elms! beneath whose shade
So long and peacefully his heart did beat—
Droop low and sadly for that heart is still!
Turn ye your morning dews to tears and shed
Them tenderly in memory of him
Who shall to your green arches come no more.
Your leaves will fall in autumn, but his feet
Will never rustle their crisp depths again;
Your branches will put forth their buds in spring
And birds will build there, but his loving eye
Shall look upon your buds and birds no more.
Droop low, ye village elms, his sacred dust
Has passed beneath your archway to that couch
Whose lonely pillow he shall never leave!

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Ye mountain peaks, bid ye the passing clouds
To crape your summits with their pale gray mists.
Death has put out the eyes that loved ye well,
And hushed the voice that joyed to speak your praise.
A note is stolen from the lofty scale
Of human harmony; and all the sweet
Resounding echoes climbing up your heights
Must miss one from among their cheerful choir.

Cease, cease to toll, ye village church-bells, cease!
Our hearts are turned to funeral-bells, and toll
For one who is not; and the aisles of thought,
Where Memory, a pale-faced mourner kneels,
Ring with the echoes of departed feet,
Which, save in dreams, will walk our ways no more:
But Faith, consoling Faith, points from the tomb
Toward the far, eternal valleys, where
The angels sow the fields of night with stars,
And bids us staunch our wounds with the sweet hope
That soul to soul we there may meet again
Him whom Our Father, in His wisdom, called
From earth to be with Him in paradise.

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LINES TO A BOUQUET.

SWEET gift! to thee, on friendship's altar cast,
My heart kneels down, o'erflowing with emotion,
For thou hast brought me pictures of a past
Which memory worships with a strange devotion.

Thou bringest visions of a distant hearth,
A far-off roof-tree and a rushing river—
A meadow which gave golden cowslips birth,
A brook whose song was "ever and for ever."

I seem to see a well-remembered face,
I seem to listen to familiar voices,
I wander in a well-remembered place;
In days of old the new to-day rejoices.

I feel a well-known pressure on my hand,
And on my yielding lip and cheek another;
On childhood's sunny threshold do I stand
And gaze into the sweet eyes of my mother.

Long-faded sunsets glow again for me,
Again are gentle hands my locks caressing;
I kneel once more beside a father's knee,
And bow my forehead to his tender blessing.

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Fair phantom fingers lead me down the vale
Where sleep for ever those my heart hath cherished,
And Memory's ghostly feet glide cold and pale
Among the frozen flowers of summers perished.

The grave, behold! gives back its early dead,
The past yields up its Herculaneum treasure;
Long-silent lips, dipped in Life's rosy red,
Sigh, sing, sob, laugh again, in pain or pleasure.

Along my path lie scattered tearful smiles—
Scattered and buried in the sad "No more"—
Which now a blossom's simple breath beguiles
To rise from the white camps of "Gone before."

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NEVER COMPLAIN.

I.

NEVER complain; why should you bare
To the world your heart?
For your red wounds what does it care,
However they smart?
Why burden its gales
With your woes and wails?
Hush them and crush them—
Never complain!

II.

What though your best aims for success
Seem wasted labor?
And what though Fate seems but to bless
Your richer neighbor?
Learn to endure it,
Can complaint cure it?
Your share bravely bear—
Never complain!

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III.

Because your path is drear and dark,
Must you shadow mine?
Because I sail a leaky bark,
Shall I founder thine?
Nay! trim your own sails
To weather Life's gales;
Quail not and fail not—
Never complain!

IV.

Craven! to make another's ears
Sewers to drain your life
Of all its refuse sighs and tears,
Ills and petty strife!
'Tis a beggar's due,
This "I pity you!"
Disgracing, debasing—
Never complain!

V.

Why will ye to the weakness yield
Of base repining?
'Tis cowardice—best kept concealed,
This senseless whining.
Why lend to Malice
Your heart's best chalice?
She'll drain it and stain it—
Never complain!

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VI.

What though hope's golden harvest be
Mingled with tares?
What though in joys attained you see
But thickening cares?
Bear your own load,
Nor another goad
With thongs of your wrongs—
Never complain!

VII.

Less sins than fretting are called crime
In this world of pelf:
Be strong, be still; 'tis strength sublime
That conquereth self.
What though your heart ache—
What though your heart break!
Wear it and bear it—
Never complain!

VIII.

Whate'er the sorrow you endure,
You can find a worse—
Some deeper wound more hard to cure,
Some bitterer curse.
In comforting others—
Friends, sisters, brothers—
Find relief for your grief—
Never complain!

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IX.

A day will come when all the pain
  Will be requited—
When clouded skies will clear again,
  And wrongs be righted.
    Smother your sighs, man!
    Stifle your cries, man!
Moan not and groan not—
    Never complain!

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EBB AND FLOW.

THE morn is on the march, her banner flies
In blue and golden glory o'er the skies;
The songs of wakening birds are on the breeze,
The stir of fragrant zephyrs in the trees.
Waves leap, full freighted, to the sunny shore,
Their scrolls of snow and azure written o'er
With hope and joy and youth and pleasure new,
While surges fast the sands with jewels strew—
The tide is in!

The stars shine down upon a lonely shore,
The crested billows sparkle there no more.
Poor bits of wreck and tangled seaweed lie
With empty shells beneath the silent sky.
Along the shore are perished friendships spread,
In Hope's exhausted arms lies Pleasure dead;
A life lies stranded on the wreck-strewn beach,
The ebbing waves beyond its feeble reach—
The tide is out!

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THE OLD CLOCK IN THE CORNER.

I MIND me of two pleasant things
My childhood loved to know,
And smile on them as memory brings
The scenes of "long ago."
I see them now, as down the past
Mute Fancy's footsteps fall—
An old clock in the corner dim,
A shadow on the wall.

The clock was old and dull with years;
Its dial scarred and wan,
For it had marked the smiles and tears
Of generations gone.
With timid eyes I used to watch
Its figure, dark and tall,
And 'twas my mother's shadow fell
Beside it on the wall.

For ever there at eventide,
That form so slight and fair,
The old clock ticking at her side,
And roses in her hair!

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And there I saw the stars look down
  And pallid moonbeams fall
Round the old clock in the corner lone—
  The shadow on the wall.

How oft, when nestled to her breast,
  I've heard her whispered prayer
That by the gracious Saviour blest
  Might be her darling there.
And when I waked in those dear arms,
  My dreamy eyes would fall
On the old clock in the corner dark—
  Her shadow on the wall.

The spring-time came, the robins sung,
  The gladiolus bloomed,
The wild rose by the roadside hung,
  And all the air perfumed.
And still I saw my mother's smile
  Illume the ancient hall,
The old clock ticking at her side—
  Her shadow on the wall.

Alas! there came a time when lone
  My heart grew evermore;
I found that I had leaned upon
  A shadow—nothing more.
Still ticking was the grim old clock
  Out in the lonely hall,
But gone for aye the form that cast
  The shadow on the wall.

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For far away in shadow-land
Where bloom the bright and blest,
The loved one with an angel band
Found her abiding rest.
I learned, as I wept beside the clock
Alone in the gloomy hall,
How precious to the heart may be
A shadow on the wall.

And love, I learned, is not a breath
Which time doth wipe away;
Though Life's a blossom kissed by death,
Then left to slow decay.
And Time, the ceaseless monitor,
Is the old clock in the hall,
And treasures which we cherish most
But shadows on the wall.

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THE ODD FELLOW'S FUNERAL.

'TWAS almost sunset, and alone I wandered
Among the mansions of the dreamless dead;
Pensive and sad, on other scenes I pondered—
On loved ones lost, on joys for ever fled.

The withering breath of autumn, faint and low,
Came sadly sighing past each quiet tomb,
While shadows, gathering upon evening's brow,
Added their darkness to the deepening gloom.

Softly upon the gentle air of even
Stole to mine ear lone notes of music sweet,
So distant that they seemed to glide from heaven
Into my sad soul's innermost retreat.

It seemed as if some angel-band were here
Chanting soft requiems above the dead;
While one lone star hung like a pitying tear
Above each slumberer's couch, by twilight shed.

Near and more near the mystic music drew;
I heard the throbbing of a funeral drum:
Another silent dweller then, I knew,
Approached this pale-doored city of the dumb.

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Then came the mourners with their measured marches,
  Their shrouded banner and the solemn bier,
Bringing, beneath the evening's starry arches,
  A brother to lie down for ever here.

Upon the coffin his regalia lay,
  Where roses freshly gathered shed perfume
Sweet as sweet life upon the white array
  Of halls all echoless and gates all gloom.

A branch of evergreen from each kind hand,
  To symbolize belief in life immortal
And joy eternal in the eternal land,
  Dropped tenderly upon the tomb's cold portal.

Ashes to ashes, dust be unto dust!
  The clinking trowel finishes the tale:
The spirit soars where neither moth nor rust
  Corrupts, nor friendships fade, nor griefs assail.

'Tis o'er! The solemn ritual is said,
  The funeral cortège vanishes in gloom,
But I still linger by the buried dead
  And shed my tears upon a stranger's tomb.

In tropic climes had been his early home:
  Ah! do his dear ones wait his coming there?
There do they pray for him when night hath come
  Nor know their darling is beyond their prayer?

While these sad thoughts arise, my memory brings
  Her own great griefs and opens them anew;
For eyes must weep and sorrow plant her stings,
  Albeit God is good and Heaven is true.

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Sorrows there are that never find repose,
Griefs that the wounded heart can ne'er forget,
Deep graves within our lives that never close,
Great suns of bitterness that never set.

I had a brother once; long since he died:
Far from the scenes of childhood's sunny bloom
He wooed illusive Fame to be his bride—
He found a deathbed and a stranger's tomb!

Kind brothers laid him in his early grave,
And soothed his dying hour with gentle care;
God's blessing on that brotherhood I crave,
And for them breathe a sister's grateful prayer.

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MY PUPILS.

I HAVE two pupils, young and strong,
Restless and roving all day long;
Bent, half the time, o'er dry old books,
And half upon their own good looks.

Some years ago a Father's care
Sent them my study hours to share—
Two wandering truants, full of sins,
A pair of tantalizing twins.

Yet they're not wicked, only wild;
But what a charge for such a child
As I was when at first I sought
To teach them as they should be taught!

Try as I may their ways to lead,
I find they're leading me instead;
And, often puzzled what to do,
I'm thankful that there are but two.

In vain, whenever comes the night
I shut them both in prisons tight;
In vain, when comes the merry morn,
I ope the doors and sagely warn;

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They gravely wink at what I say;
Then, self-reliant, go their way,
As full of mirth, as free from pride,
As though they ne'er had heard me chide.

Loads of advice the good world brings
To keep these youths in leading-strings;
But they, the saucy things, declare
Precept is cheap, example rare!

They split upon all sorts of rocks,
Give goodly folk all sorts of shocks;
Find earnest Christians out of church,
And leave long sermons in the lurch.

They go where I forbid them to,
View scenes they're told they should not view;
Trust where most men suspicion feel—
Where fewest pray they with me kneel.

They take the Bible for their priest,
And like it best explained the least;
If I must shoulder all their sins,
I wonder where the list begins.

Yet some good things do they behold—
These pupils whom I'm prone to scold—
And with them both I visions view
Which pardon wins for ills they do.

They see, in guilt's distracted face,
Still signs of a redeeming grace;
And where a brother falls, they say,
"Oh lift and help him on his way!"

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Real poverty, disguised in gold,
In Luxury's lap they oft behold,
  While truest wealth and noblest worth
  In rags and ruin walk the earth.

In fallen woman's blasted fame
They see not unrepentant shame;
  They glance the broken heart within—
  Own hers the shame, but man's the sin.

No breast so black they cannot see
Therein some spot of purity;
  And little seeds of faith sublime
  They've found in hearts of calloused crime.

Where Justice flings its stern decrees
They Pity see on bended knees,
  Saying, "Many a sin, world unforgiven,
  Its pardon findeth up in heaven."

And thus, however I may preach,
My pupils still their teacher teach:
  May He who gave them to my care
  Chide not that they no better are!

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LUTHER LANE.

WITHIN a tottering tenement,
Upon a patch of ground
Where breeze and bloom are never blent
Nor ray of sunlight found—
A spot which beauty ever shuns,
Where gloomy shadows reign—
Dwells one of Nature's honest sons,
Whose name is Luther Lane.

No tree nor floweret decks the place,
No signs of woman's care,
No smiles upon the old man's face,
No children by his chair:
The robin there ne'er rests its wing,
No cricket chirps its strain,
No blossoms blush, no birdlings sing,
For lonely Luther Lane.

So quiet this remote retreat,
It seems the home of death:
One hears the heart of silence beat,
While Nature holds her breath.

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Like shivered spears or broken blades
On blighted battle-plain,
The grasses droop, the daisy fades,
Where dwelleth Luther Lane.

In weariness and dreariness
Unvaried pass his days,
No friendly lips to blame or bless,
No voice to plead or praise.
Unheeded shine the stars on high,
Unheeded falls the rain;
'Tis all the same, whatever sky
Bends over Luther Lane.

Believe me, 'twas not always so:
That bent brow once was bold;
'Twould be less shrunken now, I trow,
Were not the heart so cold.
Once, ne'er a lighter footstep fell,
Once, ne'er a blither swain—
Triumphant was the village belle
Who danced with Luther Lane.

'Twas then—in those forgotten years
When but to breathe was bliss,
And Luther thought the "vale of tears"
Was any world but this—
He met a maid whose merry eyes
Could flatter and could feign,
And she, with mingled smiles and sighs,
Bewitched poor Luther Lane.

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Each Sabbath eve, in simple garb,
With pulses bounding high,
His bosom bleeding with the barb
Which Cupid loves to fly,
Bearing Love's electricity
In every throbbing vein,
With fluttering felicity
Wooed loving Luther Lane!

Poor Luther ever had been taught
That naught was made in vain;
A woman's promises, he thought,
Included were, 'tis plain.
So, trustingly, he knelt before
The girl he hoped to gain,
Who vowed that she, a twelvemonth o'er,
Would wed with Luther Lane.

Now there are hearts, like gypsy's palm,
Which, e'er the fate is told
That makes another's blight or balm,
Must first be crossed with gold;
So Luther's ladye-love declared
The two must two remain
Till Fortune had her favors shared
With worthy Luther Lane.

* * * * *

A lonely man in lonely mine,
He labored far away:
What sun as bright as Hope can shine,
Or make a shorter day?

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A year rolled by, another passed—
He hastened home again
His love to greet; for rich at last
Was hopeful Luther Lane.

He sought her far and sought her wide,
And found her but to know
She bore another's seal of pride
Upon her fickle brow.
She curled her haughty lip in scorn,
And met with cold disdain
The broken heart, the look forlorn,
Of jilted Luther Lane.

Cursed be thy greed of gold!" he cried;
"My heart for trusting thee;
Where woman's breast can avarice hide,
Cursed may she ever be!
The hearthstone of my life is cold;
Ne'er can it glow again,
Its chill shall yet thine own enfold—
Remember Luther Lane!"

From all he'd known and loved before
He turned to this lone spot—
A shell upon a silent shore,
By every one forgot.
No outward indications show
His bosom's dreary pain;
But life is one long, bitter woe
For crazy Luther Lane.

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CHILD SIBYL.

SHE flies before me down the garden path,
Smiles when I frown, defies my potent wrath;
Pelts me with roses when I would rebuke,
Returns my sternest glance with saucy look;
On tip-toe stands behind my elbow chair
And hides her white hands in my grizzled hair,
Then drops her bright head down upon my shoulder:
Ah! were I younger or were she but older!—
What then?

She gives me greeting with her rosy lips,
Wafts graceful farewells from her finger tips;
Along my sober path presumes to dance,
And through her curls darts back her merry glance;
Then flies, and flying bids me follow after,
Hides from my sight, allures me with her laughter;
I find her, swing her to my stalwart shoulder:
Ah! were I younger or were she but older!—
What then?

Around my neck her dimpled arms she throws,
Turns pirouettes upon her pretty toes,

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Nestles in mine her soft, bewitching hands,
While she confides her childish plots and plans,
And if I find some trifle done amiss,
She "hushes up" reproaches with a kiss!
How can I find it in my heart to scold her?
Ah! were I younger or were she but older!—
What then?

Oft when I think some sweet caress is missed,
My unexpecting brow is slyly kissed,
Or in feigned sleep if her fair head be pressed
In momentary quiet on my breast,
And unto hers my swarthy lip be neared,
She starts and veils her bright face with my beard;
Were she more timid or were I but bolder,
Were I but younger or if she were older!—
What then?

She loves all nature—she is Nature's child,
So brightly pure, so purely undefiled!
I watch her flitting in the fragrant gloom,
The fairest flower where all is flowery bloom;
And from my heart springs up a prayer to bless
With all that's loveliest her loveliness.
I call, she comes—to my broad breast I fold her:
Ah! were I younger or were she but older!—
What then?

Up from my knee, to-day, her face she lifts
While through the oriel window softly drifts
Sunlight, which rests upon her golden hair,
Like the soft blessing of a silent prayer.

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I lay my trembling hands upon her brow,
Ah! dare I wake her from her child-life now?
Close, closer to my yearning heart I hold her:
Nay, were I younger or were she but older!—
Then! Then!

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THE TOY.

I.

MY cousin Flora has found a new toy
With which she trifles to-day,
As a child with the coral and bells disports,
Which to-morrow it throws away.

II.

And why do we bitterly watch her game?
Why do we painfully start?
As she idly toys with the throbbing thing—
'Tis only a human heart.

III.

Only a heart which fell in her way,
Earnest and strong and unwrung,
Eager of purpose, and proud and brave,
Manly and noble and young.

IV.

Unused to the thrill of a woman's touch,
New to love's passionate joy:
Prone to believe in a woman's truth—
So, her legitimate toy.

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V.

She captured it with her lily-white hands,
  She kindled it with a blush,
She set it a-flame with the mantling glow
  Of her forehead's rosy flush.

VI.

She braided it in with her golden hair,
  She ensnared it with her smile,
She dazzled it with her radiant eyes,
  And bewitched it with her guile.

VII.

She wove it a spell with a glance and sigh,
  Bewildered it with her grace,
Then parted her crimson lips in surprise
  As it broke before her face!

VIII.

Ah! my cousin Flora may play too long,
  And repent of it too late;
Love is a terrible thing to transmute
  In the crucible of hate;

IX.

And 'twere well if unto my lady fair
  Were the simple art but known,
Of detecting the pebble polished bright
  From the rarer precious stone.

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X.

For the woman who plays with false and real,
Coveting both as her gains,
Finds the true will pass from her eager clasp
While the counterfeit remains.

XI.

And it were well in the ruin she wreaks
If only a heart would break,
But so often a soul is swallowed up
In a single heart's earthquake.

XII.

And the tidal wave of a love betrayed
In its mighty strength bears down
The manliness out of a strong man's life,
And leaveth it there to drown.

XIII.

So one strong word I would whisper low
In the ear of my lady fair,
As she sits 'mid the ruins of broken hearts
And smiles at the wreck—Beware!

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OUR OWN.

THE child that sports upon our knee
And clings to our embrace,
With all the happy witchery
That lights a childish face—
If he hath blessed another's arms
And other birth hath known,
How coldly do we view his charms
Beside our fair, "Our Own."

A mansion rears its lofty walls
With Wealth's impress thereon,
With stately towers and spacious halls
And sculptured coping-stone;
We upward cast no envious eye
To note its grandeur lone,
But, rearing castles in the sky,
Do loftier build "Our Own."

The world holds forth its glittering arms
And beckons to its breast,
Displaying its alluring charms
'Neath Pleasure's dazzling crest;

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But turning from its subtle art
Where purer joys are known,
How sweet to nestle to that heart
We know is all "Our Own!"

Though lowlier be the vine-clad cot
Than towering mansions nigh,
To eyes content it is a spot
Too dear for wealth to buy.
There is the kettle's busy song
Upon the warm hearthstone,
And joyous faces all day long
To glad and bless "Our Own."

Of all the wealth of all the world,
The dearest and the best
Is where affection's wings are furled
And loving lips are prest.
'Tis not the gilded hoard of gold
That brightens life alone,
But knowing what we have and hold
Is honestly "Our Own."

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THE CHURCH-BELL'S LAMENT.

WRITTEN IN THE OLD STONE CHURCH IN FISHKILL VILLAGE.

"BIMM! boom!" said an old church-bell,
As swiftly I hurried by;
"Bimm! boom! I've a tale to tell,
Oh list to my lonely sigh!"
The night was cold, the air was chill,
But so mournfully fell the tone,
It seemed my very heart to thrill,
And I paused as the bell went on:

"Bimm! boom! I've heard strange things
Come forth from the lips of men,
And ceaselessly my old tongue swings
As I think them o'er again.
'Twas yesternight, in the pale moonlight,
That a wary plan was told
To tear me down from my lofty height,
For the church was growing old.

"Bimm! boom! And I heard them say
That the building was too small
For those who wished to come and pray
To the mighty God of all.

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But I looked down and saw all 'round
Full many a vacant pew,
And I said, They want but wider ground
To indulge the wealthy few.

"They said that the church had rusty grown
In the wearing hand of Time,
And no architectural beauty shone
In the turret where I chime.
The pews were low, the desk too high
For the listening flock to hear,
But I knew the cause was a sleepy eye
And an inattentive ear.

"Then louder still their plans were voiced
And thus the word went round:
'Each stone and timber, joint and joist,
Let's level with the ground;
And in their place a structure grand
Shall the hand of Fashion rear;'
Alas! that Fashion e'er should stand
'Twixt God and his creatures here!

"Bimm! boom! in this turret high
For a century I've swung,
And tolled the years, as they hurried by,
With the stroke of my iron tongue;
I've watched the battle beneath me here,
I've seen the victory won;
I've rung to the conqueror's heart, good cheer,
And tolled when his work was done.

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"I've rung with joy at the infant's birth,
I've watched his course to fame—
Seen him embraced by his mother earth
When back to her arms he came;
I've watched the gay or saddened files
As they've thronged the old church door;
Ah! many a foot has trod these aisles
Which ne'er will tread them more.

"I have rung out my merriest peal
For the maiden's bridal-day,
And heard her vow for woe or weal
Her fresh young life away.
I've seen her brow grow old with years
In the home she honored well;
I've seen her grave bedewed with tears
As I struck her funeral knell;

"I've seen the shadowy churchyard fill
With forms whose tasks were done;
In yonder graveyard, cold and still,
They've gathered, one by one.
I've seen the old, the grave, the gay,
And youth in its fairest flower,
Like the leaves of autumn pass away,
Since I've swung in this old church-tower.

"Bimm! boom! Oh let no hand
Be raised to tear me down!
For Memory's sake let the old church stand,
Unscathed by vandal's frown.

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'Tis true the roof is moss-grown now,
And the lichened walls are gray,
But there's room for the Christian heart to bow
And the earnest lip to pray."

The clock struck twelve—the church-bell ceased
Its sad complaint to croon,
And a darksome cloud, with silver fleeced,
Passed off from the full, round moon.
I looked aloft at the turret gray,
And dashed away my tears,
As I prayed the bell, untouched, might stay
In its home of a hundred years.

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BLOOD!

AY! it is ever thus—"blood, blood!" you cry
With your well-cut, aristocratic lip;
Who lacks it, in your scrutinizing eye,
Lacks every claim to social fellowship.

You prate of proud descent and lines of kings,
And boast your own ancestral ties to me;
I love you, ladye fair, for many things—
Least of them all, your ancient pedigree.

I have found princely natures, noble blood,
In men your standard would set down as clowns,
Their dearest ties, the Common Brotherhood—
Their daily lives, the most ennobling crowns.

Rather had I one such had held the helm
That launched my pulses on Life's fretful flood,
Than that a score of princes of the realm
Had with diluted greatness cursed my blood.

Blood! the line to which drowning prètence clings
To save itself. Oh such a rotten rope!
Yet deemed the most acceptable of things
To lay beneath the social microscope.

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A man is what he is in spite of blood;
If he have lack of more intrinsic worth
It matters little be he of the brood
Of all the proudest Incas of the earth.

Your grandsire was a lord, his sire a duke,
His sire a prince, as you have evidence—
Here's an arithmetic which makes blood look,
To simple eyes, of sorry consequence:

To your grandsire you stand one-fourth related,
To your greatgrandsire you are eighth by claim;
To his proud sire, again, 'tis estimated
A sixteenth link is all you dare to name.

Here are but three removes—one more again
Leaves to you but a thirty-second part—
Scarcely enough to fertilize a brain
Or have a marked effect upon the heart.

Should we go farther back, 'twould be to find
The precious drops become so very few;
To see where in yourself they are enshrined
Would be no easy thing for me or you.

To believe your noble self the sweet result
Of honest excellence I am content;
My heart bows low to worth, but *Deus vult*
It never shall be fettered to *descent*,

Nor to the shallow sophistry of *clique*,
With its white-handed claims to high degree—
Pure grains of human gold I do not seek
In such weak rinsings of nobility.

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Fools have been known to spring from kings direct,
And in their idiocy have grown apace,
While giants in strength and kings in intellect
Have been the offspring of a peasant race.

I fear, fair ladye, that I am too blind,
Even with the powerful lens of habitude,
To honor see in birth alone, or find
Transmitted greatness in a drop of blood.

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PRESSED FLOWERS.

FOUND IN A BOOK PUBLISHED IN 1704.

I.

DEAD roses! crumbling here they lie—
What is their past history,
What the unsealed mystery
Left with these frail flowers to die.
What lips have tasted their perfume,
What eyes grown brighter for their bloom,
What hand did this blue love-knot tie?

II.

Pale emblems of some broken dream,
Broken on the wheel of Time;
Ashes of some faith sublime
Scattered on Life's hurrying stream;
Fragrant embers of regret,
Dead and pale and silent, yet
Full of eloquence supreme!

III.

Cold corpses of some perished love,
Coffined 'twixt these sombre pages,
'Mid the words of buried sages,

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Cherished trifles, ye do prove
  Truer truths than Wisdom preaches,
  Sweeter truths than Science teaches:
Truths with every age enwove—

IV.

Truths of Love's dominion telling
  O'er the realms of Life for aye:
  Though the ages roll away;
Though the bells of time be knelling
  Strong and loud, and loud and strong,
  Death of old and death of young,
Death of love they're never telling.

V.

Come, relics of some bygone trust,
  Come; I have a dead hope too—
  Dead and dumb and cold as you,
Long left to ruin and to rust.
  Let me lay you by its ashes,
  'Mong its tarnished golden meshes,
Gently lay you, dust to dust!

VI.

All the world has its dead roses
  Hidden from the eyes of sages,
  Shut between the heart's still pages;
And no look or sign discloses
  How the throb of being centres
  Where the outward never enters,
Where some blossom dead reposes!

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DON'T YOU REMEMBER?

I.

ROAMING among the daisies, you and I,
The tangled drifts of daisies, glad and young,
Beneath the azure of a cloudless sky,
The zephyrs catching, as they wander by,
The tender accents falling from your tongue—
Don't you remember?

II.

A country glow upon my girlish cheek,
As side by side the wooded slopes we rise,
Or in the fresh spring mould the beech-sprouts seek,
Or part the rushes by the winding creek,
Reading sweet secrets in each other's eyes—
Don't you remember?

III.

The soft wind tossing back my light brown hair,
The robins building in the apple trees;
A scent of roses on the morning air,
The birth of buds about us everywhere,
A warm and tender gladness on the breeze—
Don't you remember?

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IV.

The brook that leaped adown the mountain height
And sped away, nor ever looked behind
As if it feared the stern old mountain might
Find out the secret of its hasty flight,
And follow on its truant feet to bind—
Don't you remember?

V.

The hills we climbed through merry baths of dew
To catch the sun's light on our laughing faces,
Ere he should cast his beams on hearts less true
Than yours to me, love, or than mine to you,
Wasting the treasure of his first embraces—
Don't you remember?

VI.

The stream meandering through the vale below,
The marshy meadow's reedy banks between,
Where the coquettish cowslips flirted so
With every breeze, or bent their bright lips low
And kissed the water from their beds of green—
Don't you remember?

VII.

The bit of river southward of the town,
Pale in the dawn, like some gray lock of hair
That Winter might have clipped from his old crown,
And given to Spring to keep when he was gone,
In kindly memory of him to wear—
Don't you remember?

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VIII.

The pollard willow, where the honey-bees
'Gave concerts in the branches all day long,
The blackbirds whistling in the hickory trees,
The bob-o'-link on a milkweed in the breeze,
Almost committing suicide with song—
Don't you remember?

IX.

The fallen petals by the fruit trees given
To drape with white the emerald robes of May,
Along the country lanes and roadsides driven,
As if some young bride in her flight to heaven
Her bridal wreath had scattered on the way—
Don't you remember?

X.

The blood-root that came up with such a shriek
Whene'er we pulled it from its hiding-places,
The plants and mosses that we used to seek,
While Earth with her rent bosom could not speak,
But as we robbed her breathed hard in our faces—
Don't you remember?

XI.

The old beech-woods, upon the hillside steep,
Where the wild ladyslippers always grew,
Fair golden harvests that you loved to reap—
Sweet golden harvests that I loved to keep—
Blessed by the sunshine and baptized with dew—
Don't you remember?

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XII.

The quaint old garden with its graveled walks,
Its grass-plots starred with golden dandelions,
Its daffodils, May-pinks and hollyhocks,
Its white syringa with sweet-smelling stalks,
And neighbors coming after slips and scions—
Don't you remember?

XIII.

There, 'neath my chin, you held the buttercup,
Some truth you saucily declared to prove;
Then cried, when bashfully my eyes would droop,
"A girl's blush is the flag her heart runs up
To signal its surrender unto Love!"—
Don't you remember?

XIV.

And then you clasped my brown hand in your own—
You know how willfully you could persist—
There was a strange new music in your tone,
Thrilling and sweet—well—we were all alone,
I may mistake, but were my lips not kissed?—
Do you remember?

XV.

Then how the village-bells rung out one day,
How joyfully we two walked side by side;
The church door opened and we knelt to pray,
Friends crowded 'round their kindly words to say,
And shake your hand, and some one called me bride—
Don't you remember?

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XVI.

Our bark, since then, has touched on many strands,
Our wandering feet have roamed in many climes,
Our brows been kissed by suns of far-off lands;
New friends, dear love, have clasped our willing hands,
But the old times—the ever-dear old times—
We both remember.

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CREED.

I.

I BELIEVE if I should die,
And you should kiss my eyelids when I lie
Cold, dead and dumb to all the world contains,
The folded orbs would open at thy breath,
And from its exile in the isles of death
Life would come gladly back along my veins!

II.

I believe if I were dead,
And you upon my lifeless heart should tread,
Not knowing what the poor clod chanced to be,
It would find sudden pulse beneath the touch
Of him it ever loved in life so much,
And throb again, warm, tender, true to thee.

III.

I believe if on my grave,
Hidden in woody deeps or by the wave,
Your eyes should drop some warm tears of regret,
From every salty seed of your dear grief,
Some fair, sweet blossom would leap into leaf,
To prove death could not make my love forget.

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IV.

I believe if I should fade
Into those mystic realms where light is made,
And you should long once more my face to see,
I would come forth upon the hills of night
And gather stars, like fagots, till thy sight,
Led by their beacon blaze, fell full on me!

V

I believe my faith in thee,
Strong as my life, so nobly placed to be,
I would as soon expect to see the sun
Fall like a dead king from his height sublime,
His glory stricken from the throne of time,
As thee unworth the worship thou hast won.

VI.

I believe who hath not loved,
Hath half the sweetness of his life unproved;
Like one who, with the grape within his grasp,
Drops it with all its crimson juice unpressed,
And all its luscious sweetness left unguessed,
Out from his careless and unheeding clasp.

VII.

I believe love, pure and true,
Is to the soul a sweet, immortal dew
That gems life's petals in its hours of dusk—
The waiting angels see and recognize
The rich crown jewel, love, of Paradise,
When life falls from us like a withered husk.

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A TOAST.

GIVEN ON THE BIRTH-DAY ANNIVERSARY OF J. B. SLAWSON.

OUR host—to-day around his board we meet
In mutual joy his natal day to greet;
Honor to pay the well-spent years of one
Whose race, we pray, is yet not halfway run.
Could all whom he has blest be here this hour,
Hearts heaped with love would be his birth-day dower,
And many a lip, unseen by us to-day,
Smiles o'er the sorrows he has turned away.
Fill up your glasses, gentle friends, fill high—
Drink to the generous heart that's never dry,
Drink to the lip o'er its own good deeds dumb,
Drink to our host—fill high, a bumper, come—
Long life, good friends, good fortune be his own,
Blessings spring thick from all good seeds he's sown,
And may Old Age, when wandering this way,
His silver banner long forget to lay
Above the honored brow we toast to-day.

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TO-WHOO!

AN old owl sat in a willow tree
Crying aloud, Who will shelter me?
Flapping his wings in the heavy dew,
And mournfully muttering "Whoo, whoo, whoo?
Who'll give me shelter," the poor bird said—
"Me without refuge or board or bed,
With a broken heart and an aching head,
And wings as heavy, as heavy as lead—
Freezing out here in this villainous dew—
Who will be good to me? whoo, whoo, whoo?"

A young owl sat in an opposite tree,
His fine feathers picking right lazily.
He listened a while to the other's complaint,
But hadn't the patience, you know, of a saint;
So he cried, "Who'll shelter your old gray head?
Fool! if you're poor you might better be dead.
A sexton, never a banker, I trow,
Is the man to call when your purse gets low—
The crowd makes room for a corpse to pass through—
If his coffin be pine, no one asks, whoo, whoo?"

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"Whence comes this voice?" cried the elder owl,
With trembling tone and ominous scowl;
"Shall you, then, never be old and gray,
That you fling your impudent taunt this way?
Where were you born, and where were you raised,
And which of your parents, pray, was crazed,
That you were not taught with rod and rule
Your rude, impertinent tongue to school?
Rare birds have they been that feathered you:
Who were they, young gentleman—whoo, whoo,
whoo?"

"My father," the younger owl replied,
"Was a prime old 'governor,' full of pride;
I drank his wine, on his funds had fun,
And he applauded this son of a gun.
His wife, 'the old lady,' was fond of a lark—
Her day, like Fashion's, began after dark.
She gave me a taste for wandering from home,
And my favorite air was, 'I love to roam.'
I soon cut them both and away from them flew;
Who wants such old shackles about him—whoo,
whoo?"

"Where were you born?" the elder owl cried,
Holding his heavy wings close to his side.
"In the chestnut tree," was the quick reply,
"Farmer Top-knot's henroost very close by."
"Alas! and alas!" groaned the elder owl,
"You're my own lost child, you ungrateful fowl!
I am breathing my last; come hold up my head—
Receive my last gasp for I'm very near dead—
What child was e'er petted as I petted you?
Tell me that, you young rascal—whoo, whoo, whoo?"

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In vain did the old owl mutter and moan,
He was left in his willow tree all alone.
His child had fled far from the cheerless spot,
Nor offered to ease the other's hard lot.
There the old fellow thought of his son in health,
With plenty of chickens and wholesome wealth,
Leaving him under that lowering sky,
Advising him, too, to make haste and die!
And he moaned, as he sat there feeble and cold,
"It is hard to be desolate when we are old!"

Then he thought, "Did I teach him his duty when young?
Lies the fault with him or with those whence he sprung?
O fathers and mothers, the sapling small
Must be trained when tender if trained at all!
Trim up the shoots that are growing too bold,
If shelter and shade you'd find there when old."
With a flutter and mutter and shivering groan,
A few sad tears and an unheard moan,
The owl fell dead, and no mortal knew
Nor asked, as they kicked him aside, whoo, whoo?

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THE SUICIDE.

THE stars on high,
And the young moon in the summer sky
Drifting, like some lone canoe,
O'er its seas of jeweled blue—
"I walk by the river,
Where rushes quiver,
And the dull moan and monotone
Of surging waters fill mine ear—
Alone, alone, alone, alone!
I clasp my hands and wander here."

I see the gleam
Of quivering star-lamps on the stream,
As if the beacons they might be
Guiding the river to the sea.
"I pause and listen
While they glisten
On the slow but steady flow
Of river sweeping to the sea—
Echo, echo, echo, echo
Only cometh back to me."

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"I hush my heart—
I watch the mystic night-birds dart
From sea to land, from land to sea,
Like restless souls in misery.
The rolling river
Sweeps on for ever
To depth unknown, where stars shine down
On treasures hid by the miser sea—
Alone, alone, alone, alone!
No voice, no words, no love for me!

"For evermore
On rolling wave, by reedy shore,
Must mine eyes see no other fate,
My heart beat on so desolate?
O rushing river,
Bear on for ever
My weary soul, where darkly roll
The deep streams of eternity—
In thy strong arms enfold, enfold
The heart that gives its life to thee!"

The stars on high,
The slender moon in the silent sky,
Drifting like some spirit bark
O'er its seas of starry dark—
The river flowing,
God only knowing
What its flight hides out of sight,
As on it rushes to the sea—
Alone, alone, alone, alone!
Drifting to eternity!

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TWILIGHT.

I.

I WANDERED forth at set of sun
The harvest work was almost done,
And closed were doors of barn and bin,
Shutting the garnered harvest in.

II.

Down to the sunset-tinted stream
To drink was led the tired team;
And lowing cattle from the hill
Strolled homeward past the silent mill.

III.

Then came some love-belated swain
Whistling upon his load of grain,
While here and there the bending leaves
Gave kisses to the ripened sheaves.

IV.

The wild flowers on the steep side-hill
Drew close together with a thrill,
Whispering, 'mid twilight's dewy tears,
Love tales into each other's ears.

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V.

Beside the farmer's cottage door
The father held his babe once more,
While little ones, by twos and threes,
Were clustered at his sturdy knees.

VI.

I saw no sin, no shame, no frown,
And as Night drew her curtain down
She said, "Content is Life's best store;
Go teach thy heart to ask no more!"

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TRUST.

BE of good cheer; the sorrows we lament
We yet shall know as mercies kindly meant—
Angels pass into hearts by sorrow rent,
All in the Lord's good time!

The cloud will pass, the sun will shine again,
The bow of promise arch the angry main,
Peace follow storm and pleasure follow pain,
All in the Lord's good time!

The wound will heal, the burden will grow light,
The wandering footsteps will be guided right,
The thorniest path seem paved with blessings bright,
All in the Lord's good time!

Grief's sobs will turn to smiles; the lip of woe,
The radiant light of love and joy shall know,
And Faith will triumph at Doubt's overthrow,
All in the Lord's good time!

Though life's bleak waves are tempest-tossed and chill,
The Master's voice will utter, "Peace, be still"—
The raging billows bow before his will,
All in the Lord's good time!

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And we, the brittle toys by Time resigned,
Tossed from his wearied hands, bruised, broken, blind,
The heights of everlasting life shall find,
All in the Lord's good time!

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FALLACIA.

DREAMING here while stars are paling
On the brow of night again,
While the winter winds are wailing
And the moon is on the wane—
Dreaming here, weaving fancies—
Fancies for my busy brain.

Dreaming here with tear-drops welling
From a heart whose hopes are vain—
Heart with proud ambition swelling,
Swelling but to sink again—
Dreaming here, weaving fancies—
Fancies from a fevered brain.

Dreaming here while music's measure
O'er the earth sweeps wild refrain,
And the thoughts I've loved to treasure
Thrill my spirit-harp again—
Dreaming here, weaving fancies—
Fancies from my throbbing brain.

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Dreaming here, alone and lonely,
"What," I whisper—"what is fame?
Pierian sisters, tell me only
What it is that men call fame—
Toiling for it, dying for it,
Hearts aglow and souls aflame?"

Shines the moon on frozen waters—
Ghostly moon on ghostly snow—
Silent all Mnemosyne's daughters,
Comes no whisper sweet and low—
"Speak," I plead, "ye fabled Nine,
Tell me what I fain would know."

Waiting here, alone and lonely,
"What," I ask ye, "what is fame?"
Coldly comes the answer, "Only
Shade of shadow, hollow flame—
Dreamer's vision, poet's fancy,
Mocking tempter, empty aim!

"*Ignis fatuus*, fatal wooer,
Flushing fairest as it flees,
Leaving its deceived pursuer
'Midst the fierce Eumenides,
With their fearful fingers tearing
At the vitals of his ease.

"Winsome traitor, fleeting pleasure,
Very fair and very false,
Stealing all the golden treasure
From the soul's unguarded vaults—
Leaving but the cold, gray ashes
Of the pure flame that exalts.

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"Luring, laughing, gayly mocking,
Swift within the soul to creep,
In Ambition's cradle rocking
Feverish dreams that will not sleep—
Will not hide their glaring eyeballs—
Will not, will not silence keep.

"On the shore where waves are beating
Write thy name upon the sand;
Lo! the waters, when retreating,
Bear it from the silent strand—
Ask them for the vanished writing—
Writing written by thy hand!

"Saw you not the letters written
Clear and fair when first you came?
Saw you not the white sand smitten
Smooth as marble? *This is Fame*—
Fame the tempter, Fame the robber—
Robbing life to make a name!"

From the shadows thus the voices
Answered me in startling strain,
Saying, "Well the heart rejoices
When its bitter foe is slain"—
Saying, "Dreamer, dream no longer—
Take Life's real road again."

Asks my heart, the voice defying,
"If the poet's gift be mine,
Must I thrust it dead or dying
From its altar-stone divine?—
Must I quench its fires immortal—
Radiant fires I know are mine?

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"Quench them with the bitter water
Of renunciating tears,
Tell my soul that thou hast taught her
Something worse than all her fears—
Stretching hopes, like sudden corpses—
Out, unshrouded, on their biers?

"Must I lay my fingers tightly
At the red roots of my heart,
Rending out the joys unsightly
Thou hast named the poet's art—
Dying in my songless silence—
Chosen as the better part?

"Eos, then, and Leto, hear me!
By thy stars and by thy dawn!
By the midnight drawing near me,
By the gloom—hours creeping on—
Life is stricken of its sweetness—
Life beholds its glory gone."

Came the voice, "Nay, poet-maiden,
Keep thy gifts from sudden death!
Keep thy songs, and keep them laden
With the poet's noblest breath—
Breath whose sweetest aspirations
Words of cheer to others saith.

"Sing the infant to its slumbers,
Sing the dying to his rest;
Pour the music of thy numbers
In the sinner's guilty breast—
Lay the poet's balm of healing
On the heart of the oppiest.

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"Sing to earth's defilèd daughters
Songs embalmed in mercy's dew,
Sweeter far than flowing waters
Which the famed Macænas knew—
Lead the footsteps of the wanderer
By thy songs to pathways new.

"Sing the skeptic from his scorning,
Sing the sinner from his shame,
Sing to Error earnest warning—
Sing, O poet! not for fame—
Fame the tempter, Fame the mocker—
Shade of shadow, empty aim!"

In the shadows die the voices,
Fades the Presence from the room,
Dream of Fame, retreating poises
On its pinnacle of doom!
Poet's vision, dreamer's fancy—
Leto cradles in her gloom.

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INVOCATION.

COME to me, Sleep!
Thy silent seal upon my forehead set·
Weave o'er mine eyelids thy mysterious net,
Bring me oblivion without regret—
Teach fond memory to forget!

Come to me, Sleep!
Shut out the glaring grievances of day,
Thy soothing hand upon my sore heart lay,
Close to the bank where Death's cold waters play,
Guide and lead me safe away!

Come to me, Sleep!
For me the visions of thy dreamland paint,
Hush on my lip each wearisome complaint,
Break from my soul the shackles of restraint,
Cheer the spirit prone to faint!

Come to me, Sleep!
Shut me a while outside the world's great gate,
And, ere I know again my mortal state,
Teach me to fearless face my frowning fate,
Bravely still to watch and wait.

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THE LOVER TO THE BLUE RIBBON THAT HAD TIED LAURA'S LETTERS.

A FADED, rumpled, once how dear, a thing!
I never thought with such indifferent eye
Its pretty, dainty love-knots to untie,
Or stigmatize it as a "bit of string!"
But somehow Cupid wears a restless wing.
The sweet epistles that the ribbon tied
Have also lost their power to soothe or sting.
I really thought they'd thrill me till I died!
Strange how Old Time loves to obliterate
A fellow's "deathless love" in this cool way,
And turn to blessings what seemed "frowning fate,"
And make his angels prove but common clay!
What this blue ribbon bound I once held higher
Than life: to-day they lit the parlor fire!

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AT ADA'S TOMB.

POOR is that life so loved its little all
May hide beneath a coffin and a pall;
Content to run its God-allotted term,
Only to fill a grave or feed a worm!
Whose chiseled urn alone remains to tell
That life was his, and that he loved it well—
Leaves to the world no legacy beside
The fact that he was born and lived and died,
And found in life no nobler mission taught
Than to exist, to perish and be naught!

Thine, gentle being, was the loftier aim
That shuns the vulgar patronage of fame,
That held the cup to lips that were athirst,
And bent the knee for burdened souls sin-curst;
That meekly owned the earthly honor sweet
To pluck the thorns from other bleeding feet;
Thine every day, like daisies in the sod,
A bright but humble offering to thy God.
Along mine own thy life in beauty lies,
A path by which to join thee in the skies:
Thy words, thy smiles, thy kindly deeds remain
To cheer, exalt, ennoble and sustain!

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Back from thy grave, along my lonely days,
Thy bright existence casts its golden rays,
Lighting, as sunset lights the clouded west,
Joys thou didst plant within my stricken breast.

In hours when anguish most my heart enthralls
Thy memory, like a benediction, falls,
And like some sweet Gregorian chant I hear
Thy life's sweet melody upon mine ear.
The vesper-bells of love above thy tomb
Mingle their chimes with hope's perpetual bloom,
And 'mid the toils of earth and earthly things
I hear the beating of an angel's wings!

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FAIR COZ.

I.

"WHAT is that in your hair, fair coz,
What is that in you hair?"
"'Tis a gem of exceeding beauty and size,
Of Brazilian mines—a marvelous prize;
'Tis a jewel white with the captured light
Of ages condensed in a bauble bright—
A diamond it is called."

II.

"A diamond, fairest coz, you say?"
A bauble, nay, oh nay!—
'Tis the sweat of a hundred human brows
Spilled under curses and wrung from blows;
'Tis the sinews and strength of a thousand slaves,
The phosphorent light from a thousand graves—
'Tis this you have in your hair.

III.

"What is that on your shoulders, coz—
Your shoulders so soft and white?"
"'Tis a bit of exquisite hand-wrought lace
I would not for worlds have a rent deface—
A beautiful thing: see the rare design
Of Indian lilies and tropic vine—
A *fichu* it is called."

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IV.

"A bit of lace, you say? Oh no!
I see but a fair young girl
With toiling fingers and heart full of care,
Weaving her life in this tracery rare,
For a cruel crust and a crueler bed,
A pillow of stone for a virtuous head:
Of these is your *fichu* made.

V.

"Of what is your toilette made, fair coz,—
Of what is your toilette made?"
"Of jewels and silks and marvelous lace
Which a princess royal well might grace—
Bracelets of pearl with emerald clasp,
Girdle of gems with a golden hasp:
Of these is my toilette made."

VI.

"Of gems and laces and girdles gold?
Of something beside, fair coz.
'Tis made of the bitter and terrible cost
That might have saved hundreds of women lost—
Of eyes that glare with a stony stare
At the iron face of their own despair:
Of these is your toilette made!"

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SONNETS.

RENUNCIATION.

MY love died hard—I clutched its snowy throat
And watched its frantic graspings at my heart—
Saw its sweet eyes in mortal anguish start—
Heard its wild cries for mercy overfloat
The blows with which its pleading lips I smote.
Relentlessly I pressed it to its doom,
One bitter word upon its forehead wrote,
Then thrust the dead outside the gates of Gloom.
I did the murder—ay! this hand so white,
So soft and pale and womanish a thing,
Held in its slender grasp what could requite
Forgotten vows and falsehood's cruel sting.
I slew it—ay! but dying at the root
Of Life in flower, it poisoned all the fruit.

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THE MAIDEN.

I MUST send back his letters, and all these
Sweet tokens of his fond and tender truth?
Love on the lees is bitter wine, forsooth!
Oh just once more let me, on bended knees,
Press to my heart its hoard of memories!
These letters, withered flowers—this lock of hair—
I kiss them, clasp them—God in heaven, who sees
My grief, forgives its passionate despair!
We quarreled—yes! and for so slight a thing!
How was it? fault of mine, or his? Ah well!
It brooks not now—there! give him back his ring,
Warm from my hand, and for me say farewell!
Shall the world mock me? Nay! defend me, Pride!
But oh! ere this blow came would I had died!

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THE MAN.

YOU heard my bell, Victor! I rang for you.
Here! clear this rubbish from my *escritoire!*
That last flirtation really gathered more
Love-tokens—gloves and notes and ribbons blue—
Than I supposed; throw them all out of door;
I do not want them lumbering up my room—
Ah! what is that? A little sprig of rue?
It does not smell well, 'pon my word. Exhume
The other trinkets and that lock of hair
From yonder secret drawer. I had not thought
The little lady had so much to spare!
Make haste, you idle fellow, is all out?
Well dress me now for Lady Hovey's ball;
I meet a new star there—Fay Duvenal.

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TO A CAGED MOCKING-BIRD.

O WILLING warbler—whistler of the wood!
When sunny zephyrs sweep the soft South land,
And Spring sows all the soil with scented hand,
And fringy ferns fan the faint forest flood;
Oh, best and blithest of the birdling brood,
Why do I find thee caroling, captured here,
Thy mellow, mocking melody imbued
'Twixt prison bars with all its wildwood cheer?
Grand *Mæstro* of the tuneful tribes that bide
Within yon vast cathedral of live-oak;
High Priest of plumy poets, sending wide
The notes which peace, good-will and love invoke.
Thou teachest, psalmist sweet, how we should rise
Like thy brave song, above adversities.

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TO ONE BELOVED.

I KNOW, to-night, thou art among the gay,
The centre of a light and joyous throng,
Who hang upon thy laugh, thy jest, thy song;
I know the dawn will gather, cold and gray,
And find me waiting thee till break of day.
Our lives together have known no alloy,
And, dearest, thy delight is mine alway.
Though thou art absent I am with thee now;
Thought, like some stalwart swimmer, parts the waves,
And, eager for the resting-place he craves,
Leaps, nude and glowing, from the amber tide
Of Memory, and, rushing to thy arms,
His dripping limbs in thy caresses warms.

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TO MY PEN.

I SCARCE can tell if friend thou art, or foe—
If most I have to praise thee or to blame.
In the lost years unto my hand you came,
And when I would I could not let you go.
That thou hast been a solace oft, I know—
That I have learned to love thee I must own;
But this confession scarcely will atone
For moments spent with thee that I may owe
To languid leisure or to Fashion's hour.
A duty never yet I left for thee
Undone or incomplete; but I have fled,
Perhaps too oft, the social tyrant's power,
O pen of mine, to feel myself set free
When chained to thy sweet tyrannies instead

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LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN.

INTO thy sapphire wave, fair Pontchartrain,
Slow sinks the setting sun; the distant sail,
On far horizon's edge, glides hushed and pale,
Like some escaping spirit o'er the main.
The sea-gull soars, then tastes thy wave again;
The bearded forests on thy sandy shore
In silence stand, e'en as they stood of yore
While yet the red man held his savage reign,
And daring Iberville's adventurous prow
As yet had never cut thy purple wave,
Nor swung the shadow of his shining sail
Across the bark of the Biloxi brave.
Ah, placid lake! where are thy warriors now?
Where their abiding-places—where their grave?

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TO THE MOUSE THAT NIBBLED MY MSS.

AND so, my little friend, you're taking pains
To prove yourself a bit of a *bas-bleu*—
A most unwise thing, rest assured, to do;
For if there's aught on earth "pays bad," 'tis brains;
The world, too has a horror of ink-stains.
Last night, I see you tried a simple sonnet,
The night before some lively love-refrains;
You'll be more popular, depend upon it,
If you restrict yourself to bread and cheese.
Dress well, dance well, make the salute polite,
At Fashion's altar crook your cringing knees;
Get drunk, do anything, my friend, but write:
Take my advice—I warn you from the brink
Of social suicide by pen and ink.

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SACRAMENTUM AMORIS.

IF I should lift my lips to yours,
What would you do?
Kiss them and call me friend, perhaps,
Forget then to be true?

If at your feet I laid my heart
For you to take,
Would you do more than lift it up
To let it fall and break?

If I should send the searching sweep
Of fasting love
Down in thy heart's deep well, and brought
Naught to the brink above,

I there would faint, in sight of draughts
I might not drink;
And, famished for the far-down drops,
Die on the stony brink!

Oh such a shuddering sense I know
Of fearful dread
Lest living love of mine seek yours
And find it icy—dead!

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Lest it should seek to warm itself
In your dear hold,
And, finding Love's bright fire gone out,
Die there of cruel cold!

Of all Life's fearful hungerings
The heart's is worst—
Unceasing draughts of Love cannot
Quench Love's unceasing thirst.

And thee I know so sadly well!
The love divine
Which my exacting heart would crave
I know is not in thine!

'Midst thy life's sculptures then, my heart
Thou may'st not carve—
Nor yield I thee the living thing,
Lest thou should'st let it starve!

Yet I may give you all my life
Unknown to you—
Content to see you glad and free,
Whilst I alone am *true*.

To soften with an unseen care
Thy daily path,
To give thee, out of my own life,
The sweetest flower it hath;

To press from fruits of my best days
Wine for thy lips,
And joy to see thee drink, nor taste
The dregs that my life sips;

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To lead thee with an unseen hand
  To noble things,
To hear thee give grand utterance
  To grand imaginings;

To see thee write to all the world
  With mighty pen,
Made from the plumes of thine own soul,
  Truths for thy fellow-men;

To see thee pass to all that's best
  Across my heart,
Unclogged by its exactions fond,—
  This is my chosen part.

So, go thy way without me, nor
  At fate repine;
My heart I give not; but for life
  My soul, my *soul* is thine!

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AT THE WHEEL.

THAT "constant employment is constant enjoyment"
I often have heard the dear old people say;
But fuller the measure of my simple pleasure
If Robin and I were but roaming to-day.

Here I must keep busy, though weary and dizzy,
Still whirling my wheel and still spinning my thread,
Though harvests are yellow and bird-notes are mellow,
And lips of wild roses glow fervent and red!

The path through the meadow lies cool in the shadow,
The mischievous brook laughs aloud in the vale;
The cry of the plover floats tunefully over
The rattle of oziers that redden the swale.

The bee from the bosom of red-clover blossom
Has hurried to sip of the buckwheat in bloom;
The blush of the thistle, the blackbird's clear whistle,
Are blent with the summer-day's light and perfume.

The soft wandering gale fills a silvery sail,
That idly floats by on yon far-away stream,
And a frail spirit-boat, 'neath the other doth float
Faintly fair, like some beautiful dream of a dream.

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With odor of myrtle the voice of the turtle
Comes drowsily up from the valley below—
I hear the dull rapping of woodpeckers tapping
The bark where the hollow old sycamores grow.

The beetle is humming of autumn days coming,
And swings in its leaf-hammock hung in the vale—
The lily gasps faintly, as passionless, saintly,
It stands in the path of the libertine gale.

The clink, clink of the blade rises clear from the glade,
Where, sharpening his scythe, stands the whistling mower,
While the gossipping crow on his tall hickory bough
Sits moodily muttering his meaningless lore.

There are mystical fingers whose gentle touch lingers,
It seems, as I listen, on yon golden plain,
There blending and shading and lovingly braiding
The sunbeams astray with the beard of the grain.

With tired hand twirling the wheel that keeps whirling,
The wearisome spindle I speed all the day—
With the whirl of the wheel how my brain seems to reel,
And longs from the dull hum to hurry away!

I shall eagerly watch the first star-ray to catch,
That shall tell when the sun lieth low in the west;
When swallows home darting tell day is departing,
And night brings the toiler sweet guerdon of rest.

Then over the hollow and green summer fallow
I shall hear the loud summons of co'boss, co'boss;
While "Lineback" and "Dover," breaths sweetened with clover,
The cool, fragrant pastures come slowly across.

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With "Brownie" and "Daisy," milk-laden and lazy—
The gentle-eyed heifer half standing aloof,
While the dew-dimpled grass gently yields as they pass
To the lingering print of each slowly-raised hoof.

Then away, then away, as dies the long day,
O'er the path that leads down to the sycamore grove,
Where dear Robin will wait by the old wicket gate,
With a smile for my eyes and a heart for my love!

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A GEORGIA VOLUNTEER.

FAR up the lonely mountain-side
My wandering footsteps led;
The moss lay thick beneath my feet,
The pine sighed overhead.
The trace of a dismantled fort
Lay in the forest nave,
And in the shadow near my path
I saw a soldier's grave.

The bramble wrestled with the weed
Upon the lowly mound,
The simple head-board, rudely writ,
Had rotted to the ground;
I raised it with a reverent hand,
From dust its words to clear,
But time had blotted all but these—
"A Georgia Volunteer!"

I saw the toad and scaly snake
From tangled covert start,
And hide themselves among the weeds
Above the dead man's heart;

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But undisturbed, in sleep profound,
Unheeding, there he lay;
His coffin but the mountain soil,
His shroud Confederate gray.

I heard the Shenandoah roll
Along the vale below,
I saw the Alleghanies rise
Towards the realms of snow.
The "Valley Campaign" rose to mind—
Its leader's name—and then
I knew the sleeper had been one
Of Stonewall Jackson's men.

Yet whence he came, what lip shall say—
Whose tongue will ever tell
What desolated hearths and hearts
Have been because he fell?
What sad-eyed maiden braids her hair,
Her hair which he held dear?
One lock of which perchance lies with
The Georgia Volunteer!

What mother, with long watching eyes,
And white lips cold and dumb,
Waits with appalling patience for
Her darling boy to come?
Her boy! whose mountain grave swells up
But one of many a scar,
Cut on the face of our fair land,
By gory-handed war.

What fights he fought, what wounds he wore,
Are all unknown to fame;

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Remember, on his lonely grave
There is not e'en a name!
That he fought well and bravely too,
And held his country dear,
We know, else he had never been
A Georgia Volunteer.

He sleeps—what need to question now
If he were wrong or right?
He knows, ere this, whose cause was just
In God the Father's sight.
He wields no warlike weapons now,
Returns no foeman's thrust—
Who but a coward would revile
An honest soldier's dust?

Roll, Shenandoah, proudly roll,
Adown thy rocky glen,
Above thee lies the grave of one
Of Stonewall Jackson's men.
Beneath the cedar and the pine,
In solitude austere,
Unknown, unnamed, forgotten, lies
A Georgia Volunteer.

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MY SOUL.

MY soul unto my heart did thus complain:
"How long, O Jailer! wilt thou here detain
My restless spirit?
How long ere I may seek in yonder skies
The hallowed and the unconceived-of prize
That souls inherit?

How long ere Time, the High-Priest, comes to lay
His hand upon this dungeon door of clay
And break its bars,
And set me free from mortal fears and feuds
To seek the grand and solemn solitudes
Among the stars?

O heart! the heavenly spirit's earthly twin,
O mortal! locking the immortal in
With human keys,
Have mercy! Hide awhile thy watchful face,
And let my prisoned pinions fly to trace
Eternities!

And yet, O tender, though most cruel heart,
I've much to thank thee for before we part
To rejoin never;

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Ere Time's last billows I for aye have sounded,
Ere I the dim and misty cape have rounded
Of the Forever!

I from Life's clambering vines rich blooms have plucked,
And from its sweetest fruits my lips have sucked
Delicious juices;
And I have quaffed that essence from above,
That only heavenly thing, pure, faithful Love,
That Life produces.

The golden chalice of existence lifted
High on the wave into my grasp was drifted—
Its luscious wine
In purple flow upon the beaker darkled,
And o'er the brim to lips athirsting sparkled
In draughts divine!

In thy stern keeping I have grown the wings
Now fledged and pining for far nobler things,
O guardian heart!
Too long I've fettered been to earth's cold floor,
I've loved and been beloved: there is no more—
Now let us part.

I hear thee build the scaffold of my years,
Of sorrows, smiles, few hopes and many tears,
As days diminish—
I hear thy thick throbs fall like hammer blows,
Here muffled by a thorn, and there a rose—
When wilt thou finish?

When comes the hour—at midnight, dawn, or day,
When thou wilt draw these bolts and bars away
With bated breath,

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And ope for me the portals of this place,
And bid me that grim executioner face,
Relentless Death?

Death, at whose hands we find our noblest birth—
Who frees us from the swaddling-clothes of earth
And all its harms—
Who rocks the cradle of Eternity,
And lays us, loving, grateful, glad and free,
In God's own arms."

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AVONDALE.

TOLL, toll, ye bells of Scranton, toll!
Ye censers full of women's sighs,
Swing 'neath the sad autumnal skies,
And tell to every passing gale
How widows weep and orphans wail
To-day, in stricken Avondale!

Toll out, ye bells, toll three times three,
For men, for *men* to-day are dead,
And women's hearts have broke and bled
For those whose tender clasp they miss,
For lips that give them back no kiss
From sudden death's profound abyss.

Afar and near, ye sobbing bells,
Take up the echo of the dirge,
And as ye tremble, as ye surge,
Tell how the toiling miner died,
Of cries for help where none replied,
Of gasping prayers that were denied.

Of men who struggled, digged, and delved,
Where fitful gleamed the miner's lamp,
And ambushed lay the deathful damp;

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Who wrought where sunlight ne'er was shed,
And bartered life for daily bread,
That wives and children might be fed.

Of men defenseless meeting death—
  That foe with cruel forehead pale
  Who smote the men of Avondale!
Who called the roll and laughed to hear,
Through fire and smoke, dismay and fear,
Each heart's last throb responding—"Here."

Adown the valley yesterday,
  Strode to their daily toil again
  More than a hundred sturdy men,
With thews and sinews strong to strive.
Now, in the hamlet only five
Of all that hundred left alive!

Five-score men when the day begun,
  Five-score dead when the day was done—
  A hundred stricken as but one!
Oh, Opulence, that cursest fate,
Ease, deeming petty miseries great,
Think, think on Avon desolate!

Behold! a hundred new-made graves!
  Oh, how imagined woes grow light
  Before the face of such a blight!
Oh, Heaven, guard the widow-pale,
Oh, angels, hush the orphan's wail—
God's pity be with Avondale!

THE END.

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